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# ROBERT EMMET

## CHAPTER I.

### DUBLIN IN 1778.

#### I.

DUBLIN was full of carriages these last few days. Each evening more arrived from the country, from the South and the North and the West. The Autumn Parliamentary Session was about to open, and the Members with their families were hastening to the Capital. Down cobbled James's Street their carriages rolled: gay equipages, gilded and painted, each drawn by four fine horses, and accompanied by postilion and footmen. Many were escorted by gallant outriders, young bucks, brothers and cousins, hard goers all, and all well mounted on blooded stock.

Some came with a borough to sell. There was a ready market which bade fair to rise, now that the Opposition was giving so much trouble. The rascals with their new-fangled ideas! Liberty forsooth! They would make it harder than ever now for the Viceroy, Lord Buckingham-

shire, to keep his majority. The Civil List was heavy, a fair target for the Opposition. It had cost a pretty penny to win that majority in February. But then his Grace could not, if there was honour among rogues, forward a motion to Hillsborough, the British Premier, on the deplorable condition of affairs in Ireland. So the gentlemen with a keen eye to sinecures and emoluments, pensions and appointments, saw before them a season of fair hunting.

A live Opposition was good for trade; it paid the Castle and it paid the Members. Even the Catholics were beginning to stir. Mr. Talbot, on their behalf, in February, had made some half-hearted demands. But if the Commons were to pass a Catholic Relief Bill it would mean the ruin of the Constitution. A country overrun with Papists! If you give them the right to Freehold, there remains but a short step to the franchise! Of course, Grattan, the Leader of the Opposition, might be playing a game for his own hand. Flood of old had bayed the Ministry and been placated with a seat on the Privy Council. Foreign ideas were rampant. Sympathy with the Americas in their struggle for Independence was every whit as traitorous as joining Washington on Winchester Heights. So spoke the Irish loyalists, as they met after the long and eventful summer of 1778.

On the eve of the new session, carriages rolled across Essex Bridge and up Sackville Street

almost in procession. In Rutland Square, filling with shadows, the stream of traffic disembogued, and carriages rumbled off and lost themselves in the purlieus of Ballybough and the fashionable quarter of Summer Hill and Palace Row. As it grew darker, torches flickered outside the railings of the Georgian houses, escorting sedan chairs to the Rotunda. In the park behind that Assembly Hall the fountains played in the light of coloured lanterns. Gay gowns and military uniforms stood out against the dark foliage of the trees. "Like a corner of Versailles," remarked Lady Llandaff to the group of *débutantes* about her. "Ah! there goes Lord Charlemont; such a charming man, but I'm afraid he'll get himself into hot water if he continues to meddle in politics and Papistry."

The beaux were aloof and seemed preoccupied. Politics again! Why couldn't they keep such talk for the coffee-houses and the wine-shops—or for the House of Commons? Inside, they divided naturally into two groups: ultra loyalists and moderates—all sorts of moderates. The wars with France engrossed their conversation, that and the repercussion of England's colonial policy in the Americas.

In the Viceroy's loyal entourage, success was drunk to the King, fair fortune in his war with Louis and his race of serfs. Papists were not fit for the liberties that the British Constitution conferred upon all classes. Every man of sense

knew that; every man of education had seen it argued in Montesquieu's "*L'esprit des Lois*." As for the New England States with their absurd demands—Washington was no more than a rascally traitor presuming to dictate to his Majesty's Council. We in Ireland have a way with the like. Burke was a fool to talk of conciliation. Where would the disgruntled stop, if not faced with a wall of bayonets? A few hangings, Sir, and all would be quiet for the next generation. Hangings have a most salutary effect on discontent. And so on, while the claret flowed.

Nevertheless, there were anxious brows and sour looks in company better acquainted with the course of events. The surrender of the English general, Burgoyne, to the Americans at Saratoga in the previous autumn had proved with rather exasperating force that England was not dealing with a handful of guerilla rebels. With a force of 10,000 picked troops, she should have done better. Franklin and Washington, with their traitorous French alliance, must be very sure of themselves, to throw the offers of the peace commissioners, Mr. Eden and Lord Carlisle, back in their teeth.

But there were obviously other elements sadly lacking in unquestioning loyalty. His Majesty's Lords and Commons of England had seen fit in the last two generations to put overwhelming restrictions on Irish Commerce, to bolster up that

of England. Was his Majesty beginning to confuse his loyal subjects in Ireland with "the mere Irish," whom they had effectively crushed? Whose fathers had borne the brunt of the fight to maintain this part of his Majesty's dominions safe for Protestantism and his Majesty's rule? Was this their thanks: embargoes and restrictions? They all felt the pinch. There was no money in the country; and now the British Ministry was unable to comply with Belfast's request for troops to defend the port, to defend what commerce England in her bounty had left. "The Americans are not far wrong," they said. "England has duties as well as rights; his Majesty's Ministry is full of rogues."

But, among the moderates, there were other spirits who had already adopted towards England an attitude borrowed from the New England States. "See, what the Americans have gained by Rebellion! They rebelled for less than a tithe of what we have suffered, graciously though his Majesty's Government offered them free trade and seats in the British Parliament—more than any man in Ireland dreamed of asking. Was that the reward for defeating Burgoyne?"

They quoted Franklin, toasted Washington, and in their mind's eye saw in the newly-founded Ulster Volunteers, recruited this year to take the place of the army of defence that England could not provide, an instrument that might some day

be turned to a use unforeseen by the puppet Ministry in College Green. The country must arm. The exploits of Paul Jones, the Privateer, had proved how incapable the navy could be of defending the coast. Why, all through the summer, French and American privateers had used the Cork and Kerry harbours as ports of call, as ambushes whence they could pounce on English shipping. There would probably be a Bill before the House in a few days, for the formation of a militia, but the Exchequer would find it hard to meet the demand for supplies.

On the outskirts of this serious group, a gentleman from the North, who more than once had toasted "America," and still held his glass aloft, sang somewhat gaily :

*" Was she not a fool, when she took of our  
wool,  
To leave us so much of the leather?  
It ne'er entered her pate, that a sheepskin,  
well beat,  
Would draw a whole nation together."*

He might have gone further in his disloyalty, had he not been quietly restrained by some of his graver comrades. The current of conversation ran on. The young men talked of Molyneux and his "Case for Ireland." Its arguments on behalf of Irish Independence became real to them. It would make good reading for the Volunteers. Swift, too, had said many true things, as true



to-day as in the thirties. He was not, after all, a disgruntled placeman disappointed by a Whig Ministry; or, if he was, he often hit the right nail on the head. Had he not been the first to advocate the support of Irish manufacture? Had he not made them squirm for it, in that affair of the debased coinage? Late into the night talk thus continued among those who did not choose to join in the cotillions but preferred to listen to the wisdom of returned veterans from America.

In the cold morning light, the carriages left the Rotunda, passing on their way carts of vegetables creaking towards the Coombe Markets, and heavy-footed workmen plodding along to the Liberties.

Beggars, early astir, got a coin for their pains; or, perhaps, only a flick of the postilion's whip.

## 2.

THE season of excitement had begun. Here was a rich harvesting of adventures and conquests. A time when ambition achieved unexpected reward, particularly if that ambition coincided with the interests of the oligarchy which then ruled Ireland. Politics, abounding in preferments and sinecures, was a profitable game for a sure player, provided that he had been born into the proper caste or was bold enough to command his price. Even the timid had a hope of advancement if, with patience, they waited

assiduously in my lord's ante-room, bowed low enough at my lord's levees, said the right thing at the right time, and voted as they were told.

But in Dublin, in the year 1778, there was an uneasy stirring in the ranks outside that favoured caste. In the Parliament Mr. Grattan had been asking awkward questions of the Ministry; Mr. Flood had more than once fluttered government doves by his searching hawk-like analysis of their policy. Under the revealing scorn of their oratory it became obvious that the Ministry was ruling Ireland in the interests of the English government; not of Ireland nor, finally, even of their own class.

The backbone of the British ascendancy, the landed Protestant yeoman, was left to the mercy of the Catholic peasantry, while at the same time he was expected to keep that peasantry under his heel. Daily he ran the risk of a shot from a Whiteboy ambush. Yet he got no reward, not even thanks. All the plums went to the Ministry and their friends.

In taverns, in the poor parishes of St. Luke and St. Catherine, where men congregated, talk was tinged with discontent. Merchants, clothiers and sergemakers spoke with anger of the existing Parliament and of the unjust laws which had stifled Irish commerce. Depression in trade and the headlong decline in the woollen manufacture had thrown thousands out of work. The Liberties, once a teeming hive of industry,

showed signs of rapid decay. Skilled artisans swelled the beggar ranks, hitherto recruited solely from the soil. Subtly a feeling of kinship sprung up between the city workers and the wandering peasant who had lost his land. The Dublin artisan listened with more understanding to the tale of misery the peasant had to tell. For the first time he learned to look for a reason behind the shootings and burnings of the Whiteboys. The landlords, when all was said and done, were the masters of all; having virtual powers of life and death over their tenants, the electors, they held the boroughs in their hands.

Dublin, in these days of glitter and display, was a pleasant place indeed. But Dublin was not all Ireland—nor were the Members of Parliament, up from their walled homes, a fair sample of all Ireland.

An old peasant poet had said that a bright carbuncle had grown on the side of Ireland, that its look of richness was disease, that it sucked the blood of the country to feed itself and put on those gay colours. No! Dublin was not the real Ireland which had slowly been reduced to peasantry. The real Irish, wretched, impoverished, degraded, lived in mud-walled, mud-floored, windowless cabins. The plantations had driven them out of the rich lands of Leinster and Munster, into the wilds of Connaught. In the waste lands, in mountain glens, where the soil was black and quaking, they crowded thickly,

or along the rocky coasts of the West and South they huddled in grey stone villages. On the barren stretches that no planter wanted they crept back and lived as slaves, these "Children of Kings," "Sons of Milesius." This was the real Ireland that, in spite of its poverty and degradation, guarded the remnant of an old Gaelic culture. Princes and poets had merged themselves in this peasant conglomerate, all were under the heel of the Landlord garrison, the Ascendency. It was the lowest ebb in the history of the Irish people, but, whether or not they were to succumb to the slow, unconscious, but almost certain doom of extermination, they were the real Irish.

After Limerick their leaders had flown, wild geese on every wind: now they were forlorn and leaderless. Their songs were now the songs of a hope that was dead. The Stuarts, to whom they had looked as the restorers of liberty, had failed them; although the people still sung of their return, in dream poems whose prophecies had not come true. They remembered, too, and cherished the poems of Aoghan O'Rathilly, and his bitter condemnation of English dominion in Ireland.

*" Pirates rule in the place of the Princes,  
In comfort, in ease, in luxury, in spacious  
palaces.  
Full of strength, full of food, full of words,  
well feasting,  
Uncouth, gabbling, greedy, cynical."*

The penal laws had crushed them to the earth. The whole structure of Anglo-Ireland rested on the bent neck of the peasant. He bore the weight of a landlord garrison, greedy, profligate and cruel, attending with a host of parasites a venal and expensive legislature, with no power for good and a definite leaning towards evil.

Politically the peasant had no existence. For sustenance he had potatoes. If the harvest was bad he had nothing. His utmost effort saw him no richer; there was nothing he could call his own. Even his prayers were proscribed. With the bulk of Irish land in the hands of absentees, the exported rents were an effective tax for the impoverishment of the country. Landed interest in the Irish parliament held the power and, in its state of lethargic corruption, no redress was possible.

It seemed that Swift had written in vain. No politician since his time had seen that political stability and the health of the country, from even the most diverse points of view, must in the end be based on a contented farming community. Differing in religion and nationality from the Anglo-Irish, the peasant was compelled to a condition of servitude; the very spirit of his race, his adherence to his religion, his loyalty to lost causes, and the refusal in his heart to accept as rightful rulers the usurpers of the Stuarts, had brought him to this. Added to these causes were the spirit of conquest and confiscation, the

traditional instinct of the settler for the extermination of the native race.

### 3.

IN this year, 1778, on the 10th of March, Robert Emmet was born at 109 Stephen's Green, where his father, Dr. Robert Emmet, practised as "State Physician."

Originally Norman-French, the Emmet family had lived in Lancashire for several hundred years. When, early in the seventeenth century, the Emmets came to Ireland, they had already established a long and distinguished tradition. "Tenez le Vraye," and "Constans," were the mottoes of their family, which had borne heraldic arms as far back as the fourteenth century.

Dr. Emmet, the father of Robert Emmet, was born in Tipperary, the son of a distinguished physician. Like his father, he was brilliant in medical science, and was also a noted classical scholar. In 1760, Dr. Emmet married Elizabeth, the daughter of James Mason, of Ballydowney, near Killarney. Shortly after their marriage, the Emmets left Cork, where the husband had started practice, and came to Dublin; in Molesworth Street, Dr. Emmet continued to practise his profession, and rapidly achieved success. In 1771 he was appointed State Physician to the Lord Lieutenant; but he was not only a popular

doctor to the rich and fashionable, although this appointment had shown their recognition of his trustworthiness and their confidence in him; he was perhaps happier as physician to the poor. He and his wife succoured many who were in need, and these ties formed with the people were to remain when others were found wanting.

Of Dr. Emmet's children, only four survived—Christopher Temple, Thomas Addis, Mary Anne, and Robert. Robert was born into a family where cultural development was considered of the greatest importance. French, Latin and Gaelic were the languages of the home; English was used in social life. The fact that Robert was brought up in a household where the classics were vital, and where the latest theories were discussed with clearminded honesty by Dr. Emmet and his guests, laid the foundation of that mature vision and mental integrity which afterwards characterised his every action.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

#### I.

ROBERT EMMET'S birth coincided with another, the birth of a new phase in the history of Ireland. The year 1778 does not mark the renaissance of Irish nationality; Irish nationality had dragged itself through the tortures of Kinsale, Limerick, Aughrim, and the final failure of the Stuarts to an almost complete oblivion. Only peasants became its inheritors. No prince gave it fealty, no banners waved on the wind as its token. But here in Dublin we watch the first years of another infant, the Nation that the Protestant colonists would have stand upon its own legs. For another century the Cailleach Beara is forgotten, to mourn on gray shores her lost heritage and her exiled children, to the crying of the storm and the listening of the calm.

Around the cradle of Robert Emmet, the political turmoil that began this new era swept. The demand made in the Autumn Session to raise a militia, was found impracticable when the House realised that the Treasury had no funds.



So, in a mood of defiance and despair, the gentlemen of the Kingdom decided to raise corps of Volunteers at their own expense, and devote them to the defence of the country. For the moment, the Opposition was distracted from its dangerous contemplation of trade disabilities by the introduction of a Catholic Relief Bill, amounting to a virtual repeal of the Penal Laws. An amendment for the repeal of the Test Clauses, which operated mostly against Presbyterians, was also passed. But whenever Irish trade was mentioned, there was an uproar in the House. American example was contagious and Members' speeches sometimes approached sedition. "England," said Hussey Burgh, "must either support this kingdom or allow her to support herself. Her option is to give in trade or to give in money."

In September of that year forty thousand men had been enrolled in the Volunteers, by peers, country gentlemen, merchant companies and associations of various kinds. The Viceroy, on the advice of the Irish Council, issued arms to the Volunteers from the Government magazines. Gradually the Opposition realised its strength. The Volunteers formed a weapon to back any demand; redress was within reach. Strength was behind them, and the Commons were held to a precarious loyalty only by viceregal bribes.

Grattan and Hussey Burgh planned the opening of the campaign that was to end with Grattan's

Declaration of Rights in 1782. The immediate result was the repeal of the Acts restricting Irish Trade. Dublin was overjoyed, and showed it by illuminations and parades of gaily dressed Volunteers. Many a corps in blue or scarlet uniform, with its detachment of cavalry, represented a ruinous mortgage on the estate of its commander. But this was a time of enthusiasm, and the era of liberty was to pour wealth into the country.

## 2.

THE Emmet family moved in 1777 from Molesworth Street to No. 109 Stephen's Green, to the house off Glover's Alley, next door to the College of Surgeons.

The eldest boy, Christopher Temple, was already recognised as one of Trinity's most distinguished and promising graduates. At the famous Historical Society, the poetry and eloquence of his speeches won for him, at the age of sixteen, the reputation of being the society's most brilliant speaker. When, in 1781, he was called to the Bar, it was said that he had a greater knowledge of law than any of the judges on the bench!

Thomas Addis, the second son, was a thoughtful, retiring boy. After graduating as Bachelor of Arts he went to Edinburgh University to study medicine. Besides these professional studies, in which he excelled, he continued his

interest in literature and science, and became so popular with the students there that at one time he was elected President of five college societies.

From that quiet and studious house on the Green, Dr. Emmet watched the trend of events. He felt his heart warm at the new enthusiasm, at the dawning consciousness of self-respect in this changing Ireland. He saw the honesty of Grattan, and approved in him the leaven of poetry that made him more than a mere politician. Grattan was strong and inspiring, and would turn into courage and enthusiasm the half-heartedness and cowardice of the men that surrounded him in the House of Commons. Grattan could create a public opinion that would make treachery look vile even to traitors.

Another year began. Grattan's mind went deeper than the abolition of Trade restrictions. In his dreams for Ireland there always confronted him the thought of Poynings' Law which, since 1494, had condemned the Irish legislature to impotence. With the power of the Volunteers behind him, he saw the possibility of success. The Catholics and Dissenters must be part of the Nation. To Grattan it was a choice between a Protestant settlement and an Irish Nation. The Parliament was fettered; that fetter must be broken. Three-fourths of the nation was enslaved; that slavery must be ended. In April, 1780, Grattan had moved in Parliament "that the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland are the

only power competent to enact laws to bind Ireland." But the House of Commons was not yet ready to support him, and the question was dropped for that session.

In the following year, 1781, the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown caused further disaster to English arms in America, and confirmed the Volunteers in the republicanism that had been fast gaining a hold on them. Vague ideas on the rights of man, which ten years later were to find a more definite expression in the writings of Paine, stirred the ranks, especially in the North, where the artisan population had acquired some education. Many gentlemen, once enthusiastic, now grew timid, sensing a threat to themselves in the power they had conjured up; for Volunteer Clubs were pouring forth seditious resolutions, asserting Irish Independence, declaring that the House of Commons was ruled by a Castle-corrupted majority.

With the Convention at Dungannon of the Ulster Volunteers in February, 1782, the Government realised its powerlessness to refuse demands supported by the armed force of the Volunteers. The Convention unanimously passed the resolution, "that a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, to make laws by which Ireland be bound, was illegal, unconstitutional and a grievance." A second resolution, proposed by Flood, for the abolition of Poynings' Law, was also passed.

Within a few days, the resolutions were confirmed by corps in the other provinces. But as the majority in the House of Commons could be patriotic only on condition of Anglo-Irish security, both resolutions were defeated.

A few months later, on the fall of the Tory Ministry, Grattan made another attempt to introduce the rejected resolutions. April 16, 1782, was a great day for the citizens of Dublin. Never before had the Anglo-Irish seen such a manifestation of their power. Dr. Emmet took his two sons, Christopher Temple and Thomas Addis, through the streets, bright with banners and uniforms, loud with cheering and gaiety. The result of Grattan's resolution was a foregone conclusion. Portland, the new Viceroy, found himself unable to refuse Volunteer demands, and Grattan's famous Declaration of Irish Rights was carried by acclamation, and the right affirmed of the Irish Parliament alone to make laws for Ireland. That night in the Emmet household, it was told how Grattan had spoken to the free people of Ireland. The boys were full of enthusiasm; they felt as they listened to the words that something new had come into Ireland, or that something that had been asleep had leaped awake. "I am now to address a free people . . . I found Ireland on her knees. I watched over her with an eternal solicitude. I have traced her progress from injuries to arms, and from arms to liberty . . . Ireland is now a nation. In that

new character I hail her, and bowing to her august presence, I say *Esto perpetua.*"

When Robert Emmet was old enough to begin his education he was sent to Oswald's school in Dopping's Court, off Golden Lane. His father had chosen it because of its reputation for proficiency in the teaching of mathematics, and the genius of every country was turning in the direction of the exact sciences. Fair prospects might lie in that direction. But little Robert's mind was already filled with soldiering. He saw the glory of the Volunteers and cherished the brave words that Grattan spoke when he came to his father's house.

Although nominally free, the new Parliament represented the interests only of one-fifth of the entire population. Closed boroughs returned the majority of the members. Even a proportion of the patriot party was returned by such boroughs. The majority of seats went to placemen, men who held appointments from the Crown, which they would automatically lose if they attempted to oppose any government measures.

The Press of the day teemed with all sorts of propaganda in prose and verse on the subject of the new demands. The people of Dublin read that "Free Trade and an Independent Constitution were two of the greatest curses that could befall a country unless they be crowned, and that speedily, too, with Parliamentary Reform. Without such a Reform, concessions of commercial

and constitutional privileges were but the alms of beggary.”

### 3.

THE agitation for Reform continued until the great day came when, in November, 1783, the Volunteer delegates reassembled in Dublin to seek an amended Representation. The city was ablaze with colour and the glint of steel. Detachments of country corps accompanied their delegates; well mounted and proud in their uniforms of blue and green, they made a brave sight. Sackville Street was packed with vast crowds waiting to catch a glimpse of the Earl of Bristol, the great Protestant Bishop of Derry, the most distinguished delegate and a staunch advocate of suffrage for Catholics.

Six beautiful horses, decked with bright ribbons, drew the open landau; His Grace, clad in purple and gold, bowed graciously on either side. Storms of applause greeted his approach; trumpets blared; troops of light cavalry pranced behind, and the Barristers' Corps, gay in their scarlet and gold, completed the cavalcade that accompanied the popular delegate to the Rotunda.

The British Ministry, however, dreaded the idea of reform in the Irish Parliament; it would mean the loss of the only instrument through which England could ever hope to regain her decreasing power. “Unless the Volunteers

dissolve in reasonable time," wrote Fox to Lord Northington, "government, and even the name of it, must be at an end."

To the oligarchy that ruled Ireland, the idea of franchise for Catholics caused panic. They feared, if the Catholics were to obtain any rights, the possibility of a claim on their part for the confiscated estates of their ancestors. The remnant of the Catholic aristocracy in Ireland constituted in some respects the most servile body in the kingdom; depending for the safety of their persons and estates on their Protestant neighbours, they had, so far, dared nothing in their own cause beyond presenting to each successive Viceroy slavish addresses lamenting their sad lot. The voice of the peasant was still silent, but in his mind there worked a leaven of thought.

The Convention of Volunteers had not in its composition the elements of success. The delegates were unanimous for Reform, but there was little unanimity when they came to a discussion of the extent to which reform was advisable. Early in the proceedings of the Convention a supposed letter from Lord Kenmare, leader of the Catholic Committee, was read. It had been written by Sir Boyle Roche at the instigation of the Viceroy, who thus adroitly insinuated a fatal wedge at the first rift. The letter declared that Catholics were so "grateful for the great concessions already made to them that they could not think of asking for



elective franchise." A dead silence marked the surprise and disappointment of the majority of the Convention. The amendment was dropped, and the ardour damped of the most earnest Volunteers, supporters of the Catholic cause.

It was under these unfortunate circumstances that Flood was deputed to present to the House of Commons a Bill to abolish closed boroughs and to extend the franchise to Protestant freeholders. The Bill was rejected by a majority of eighty. Most of that majority were placemen and bribed nominees, the very people whom the Reform intended to wipe out.

The Volunteers were now denounced and insulted in the Parliament. Lord Charlemont, the chairman at the Rotunda, intimidated by the Government, dismissed the Convention suddenly.

The crisis for the Government was over. So was the power of the Volunteers. For some time they maintained their outward shows of force; but marches, parades and banners were merely an empty camouflage of powerlessness. The determination that had achieved the Constitution of '82, was no more; it was no longer strong enough to insure the permanency of that Constitution by reforming it.

The history of the decade that followed is a record of the Volunteers' failure.

## CHAPTER III.

### FOR IRELAND AND THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

#### I.

TWELVE years passed. The Revolution of the Americas, with their still more important revolution in the principles and practices of government, was followed by the Revolution in France. The storm of that revolution boomed upon the shores of Ireland, where unrest increased daily.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, secret societies, peasant revolts, and agrarian outrages had expressed the sullen discontent of an oppressed people. The inhuman measures employed by the Irish government to suppress them showed the futility of laws not designed to remove the causes of discontent.

In the South, harried peasants wandered homeless; their small farms and even the village commons had been seized and turned into grazing lands. At night the Whiteboys were banding themselves together, tearing down enclosures and digging up pasture lands. In vain they tried to force their social rulers to abandon their selfish grazing policy in favour of tillage, to give more employment to the labourers and more security to the cottiers.

The collecting of exorbitant rents, and the exacting of tithes from the Catholic peasantry for the Established Church, were other causes of frequent disturbance. Resolutions passed at meetings of Munster peasantry showed their spirit and determination to oppose their oppressors "until they are glutted with our blood, or until humanity raises her angry voice in the councils of the nation to protect the toiling peasant and lighten his burden."

In the North, an association of agrarian reformers was known as the "Hearts of Steel." Its members were the outraged tenants of the absentee Lord Downshire, driven to frenzy by exorbitant rents and by eviction from their farms. The Oak Boys, recognised by the green leaves in their hats, opposed the system of compulsory road repairing, by which they were required to contribute their unpaid labour for the upkeep of the country roads.

In opposition to these secret societies were the Wreckers, or Peep o' Day Boys, an Anti-Catholic organization formed in Armagh in 1784. They raided at dawn the homes of Catholics, ostensibly in search of arms, but in reality to burn and pillage and to obtain for themselves the little holdings of their victims, many of whom were forced to fly to Connaught.

In America, and then in France, oppressed peoples had fought for and obtained their charter to the Rights of Man—liberty, property, security,

and the right to resist oppression. These ideals had gradually penetrated to Ireland, and especially to Presbyterian Ulster, where they caught and spread like fire in stubble.

The pamphlets of Thomas Paine, appearing about this time, did much to spread the new ideas. At fairs and markets, in taverns and shebeens, where peasant and artisan met, his works were passed from hand to hand. Poor and rich alike were reading Paine. "When we suffer or are exposed to the same miseries by a government which we might expect in a country without government, our calamity is heightened by the reflection that we furnish the means by which we suffer." Such words found an echo in any Irish mind. In Ulster homes, Paine was supplanting the Psalter and Prayer Book. Even the country urchin plodding along to school, and the beggar tramping the roads, often counted as a prize among their scant possessions a copy of the "Rights of Man." The village schoolmaster, the one constant ferment among the oppressed, was a savant in these matters. He could be seen and heard on long summer evenings, an orator at the cross-roads; mingling in his theme of liberty the vanished glory of the Gael, the nobility of the Commonwealths; extolling the reawakening in America and France; and inevitably turning to the Ireland of his own day, to the misery, want and degradation below, to the tyranny and the profligacy above.

At a Northern Patron, during a lull in the dance, the traveller might hear the lilt of :

*“ Good people, hear my story, Miron ton ton,  
Miron taine.  
Attend to what’s before you, c’est tout à la  
mode de Paris.  
For Frenchmen now can feel, Sir, Miron ton  
ton Miron taine.  
In spite of the Bastille, Sir, cry vive la  
libertie ”;*

or another chorus in which all would join :

*“ Viva la, long live the People, free from care  
and slavery;  
Viva la Hibernia, Man will surely soon be  
free.”*

## 2.

WHILE the people of Ulster were discussing and taking to heart the writings of Paine, and the more enlightened among the peasants of the South were gradually becoming aware of his ideas, young Robert Emmet already found himself interested in the works of John Locke. Only twelve years old, he was always at the top of his class, and when the lessons for the day were over he would take down Locke’s “ Human Understanding,” and turn to the pages devoted to “ Government.” Soon he had filled the narrow margins of the book with his own strangely mature reflections, criticisms and deductions.

Dr. Drennan, a friend of the Emmet family, was a lover of liberty; he had written many fine things in that cause; and Robert often questioned him about the Volunteers, whose brilliant parades he had watched in Phoenix Park. In the evenings he would read or recite aloud one of Drennan's stirring addresses to the people of Ireland or to the Volunteers:

"The Volunteer army is the buckler of Ireland . . . it is not your manual or your marching that has raised, and I hope will prolong, the wonder of your enemies. It is your numbers, your Union, and your Perseverance . . . The Volunteers of Ireland associated for some other purpose than to be the bodyguards of a servile aristocracy!"

Robert, too, took up his pen, and for the first time found in himself some of Drennan's fire.

*"Brothers, arise! your country calls,  
Let us gain her rights or die.  
In her cause who nobly falls,  
Decked with brightest wreaths shall lie;  
Freedom's genius o'er his bier  
Shall place the wreath and drop the tear."*

It would seem that the young patriot had already looked afar into his own life; he saw that heroism might call for sacrifice.

Meanwhile, the people of Ireland were realising that tithes, disqualifications resulting from religious beliefs, and an aristocracy resting on a crushed peasantry, were among the causes that

produced the French Revolution; causes, too, from which both Catholic and Dissenter in Ireland were suffering. Dependence on England was no guarantee of welfare to Dissenters, who were debarred from public affairs and possessed but little landed property. As they became aware of their own wrongs, they also realised those of the Catholics. To those of the Volunteers and Dissenters who thought, it gradually became clear that the only hope of Reform lay in the union of the people of Ireland of all religious persuasions.

In the year 1791, some Belfast men, including Samuel Neilson, Henry Joy MacCracken, and Thomas Russell, Captain of the 64th Regiment, founded a new society to revive the great principles of the Volunteers: Reform and Parliamentary independence.

“Our efforts for reform,” Neilson held, “hitherto have been ineffectual, and they deserved to be so, for they have been selfish and unjust, as not including the rights of Catholics in the claims we put forward for ourselves.

Theobald Wolfe Tone, the young barrister whose writings on behalf of the Catholics had attracted the attention and admiration of Dissenters and Catholic Committee alike, wrote the declaration for the new society of United Irishmen. The first clause ran: “This society is constituted for the purpose of forwarding a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights,

and a union of power among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and thereby to obtain a complete reform in the legislature, founded on the principle of civil, political and religious liberty."

At first the new movement showed greatest vigour in the North, but gradually it spread to Leinster and Munster. Even into Scotland the message of the United men was carried. "We have told you what our situation was, what it is, what it ought to be; our end a national legislature; our means a union of the whole people. Let this union extend throughout the empire; let all unite for all; in each country let the people assemble in peaceful and constitutional convention."

The drive for Reform and Emancipation gradually brought Catholic and Dissenter together. The latter body became more daring and persistent in their petitions on behalf of the timid and crushed Catholics. The Catholic question soon grew to such magnitude that for the moment it overshadowed all other political discussion. The Catholic Committee reorganised itself on a new basis and became representative of the entire Catholic population—a step most alarming to the Government.

"Were the representatives of three millions of oppressed people," it argued, "once suffered to meet, would it be safe or even possible to refuse their just demands?"



Throughout Ireland, the Grand Juries published the most frantic resolutions against the plan of organisation and its authors, whom they charged with little short of high treason. A pamphlet war ensued. Thomas Addis Emmet became the champion of the Catholics, and his counter-manifesto was so powerfully written and so superior to all Government publications, that it effectually ended the controversy.

On the death of his brother, Christopher Temple, Thomas Addis had returned from the Continent, and at his father's request threw up his medical career and started to read law. In 1790 he was admitted to the Irish Bar. From 1792 onwards, Robert watched with increasing interest his brother's quiet activities on behalf of the Catholics. He heard him speak of the hopes of Tone and Russell, and grew to admire the legal skill which he employed in all their undertakings.

On the 12th of July in the same year, 1792, the United Irishmen held a grand parade and procession in Belfast, to commemorate the taking of the Bastille, and to bring forward with force the Catholic question. On that brilliant July morning, Catholic and Dissenter officers in bright regimentals breakfasted together. To beating drums, flying colours and all the panoply of war the various brigades marched to the review ground. One of the standards borne on high represented, on one side, the Release of the Prisoners from the Bastille; on the other, Hibernia

in chains, with the motto: "For a people to be free, it is sufficient that they will it."

In the afternoon stirring addresses were read "To the people of Ireland," and "To the National Assembly of France." "Success attend the armies of France. May your soldiers, with whom war is not a trade but a duty, remember that they do not fight merely for themselves, but that they are the advance-guard of the world."

In 1793 Robert, aged fifteen, became a student at Trinity College. From the first, he took a high place amongst his fellow under-graduates, and, like his brothers, carried off many of the college prizes and premiums. The signs of an unusual talent were shown by his great interest in mathematics and science. He even made a laboratory in the house in Stephen's Green so that during the long vacations he might be able to continue his chemical experiments.

For such a young boy he was strangely self-reliant. Dr. Madden, the great biographer of the United Irishmen, describes how one night after the family had gone to bed, Robert continued to work at a difficult problem in Algebra. He had a habit of biting his nails when deep in thought, and suddenly he felt the most violent pains. Earlier in the evening he had been using corrosive sublimate. Some of the poison must have remained on his fingers. At once he realised the cause of the pain but did not wish to disturb his father. Instead, he got a volume of the

“ Medical Encyclopædia ” from the library, and looked up the article dealing with poison. Chalk was recommended as the antidote for poisoning from corrosive sublimate. Robert remembered that there was chalk in the coach-house. The door was locked but he broke it open, took some of the chalk, and returned to his problem.

In the morning, when he came down to breakfast, his face looked “ as small and yellow as an orange.” It was only when the family questioned him that he told of the agony that he had suffered all night, while persisting with the problem until he had found the correct answer.

Even within the gates of Trinity College, intended by its authorities as the nursery for a future generation of Ascendency leaders, the repercussion of the national turmoil was felt. The debating societies of Trinity became the arena for the discussion and analysis of ideas that were exercising men’s minds outside.

The more serious students were spending less time in the coffee-houses and more in preparation for speeches and in the discussion of politics. Many of them had seen odd numbers of the “ Northern Star,” and had read the articles that supported emancipation and propagated the doctrine of union among Irishmen. Many, too, had read with admiration the bold offer of the French nation, to grant fraternity and assistance to all peoples who wished to recover their liberty. Nor did the increasing audacity of Volunteer

resolutions pass unobserved. In 1793, the Belfast Light Dragoons declared that "The only trusty safeguard of a country is an armed and disciplined people; we will therefore continue embodied in the use of arms, until we shall obtain the objects of our wishes; and then we will continue in arms that we may defend them." During the same year they saw the Lawyers' corps adopt the motto, "*Inter arma leges.*" Another corps took the name and uniform of the "*Garde Nationale*," and put on their banner the significant device of a harp without a crown. That year the parade round King William's statue was forgotten and the orange cockade was abandoned for the green.

At the Debating Society for younger students, Robert, the most brilliant student of his year, was attracting much attention by the unusual ease with which he spoke and by the boldness of his political ideas. At one of their debates the subject was, "Whether an aristocracy or democracy is most favourable to the advancement of science and literature." Robert was ardent on the side of democracy. His mind was already steeped in the classics; with forceful eloquence he reviewed the great republics of antiquity, and pointed out to his young audience how much they had done for the advance of art and literature. Finally, he chose the daring example of the infant republic, France. Robert had referred to Cæsar's crossing the river with only his sword and his

commentaries; he drew a parallel between Cæsar's action and modern France: "at this time swimming through a sea of blood; in one hand she wields the sword against her aggressors, with the other she upholds the interests of literature, uncontaminated by the bloody tide through which she struggles."

Robert sat down in a storm of applause, and relapsed into one of his long silences. By his eloquence he had already shown his power of convincing others.

About this time he and Thomas Moore became great friends. They went for long walks into the country; or, sometimes, Robert would come to Moore's rooms and listen to the poet playing Bunting's airs on the piano. Once when Moore struck up "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old," he was astonished to see Robert leap up from his seat and passionately exclaim: "O that I were at the head of twenty thousand men, marching to that air!"

### 3.

FROM the beginning until the end of the eighteenth century, affairs in Ireland had been followed with a keen interest by the French Government. There are many reports, memoirs, and plans of invasion for this period in the French archives. In 1792, one of these projects was considered to be of such importance that Le Brun, the Minister for War, had summoned a special

conference to consider it; on going to his desk, he found that the document detailing the project had been stolen. It was sold to the British Government for £500.

About the same time, Noel, principal French propagandist in London, wrote from there to Paris: "The revolution in Ireland acquires each day a fresh degree of maturity. It moves forward, prudence and determination marking its progress . . . the Convention has for its object not only the presentation of a demand for Catholic emancipation . . . but to break an unbearable yoke, to raise a great nation from slavery; in a word, to make Ireland a Republic and to separate her from England."

In 1794, the Rev. William Jackson was sent by the Committee of Public Safety in Paris to communicate with the United Irishmen. Jackson's lack of discretion in Dublin led not only to his arrest, trial, and conviction, but also focused the attention of the Government on the United Irish Societies. Many members, including Wolfe Tone, were forced into exile. The Societies were forcibly suppressed, but were reorganised at once on a secret and revolutionary basis; and a little later a military organisation was added to the civil. At this point, many of the timid and prudent members withdrew from the Society; the more courageous and determined remained to develop the character of that association, still called the "Society of United Irishmen."

The original objects of the United Irishmen—Reform and Emancipation—were changed into the establishment of a Republic; the means, if necessary, revolution. To obtain a reform from English and borough interest, foreign aid was necessary, but foreign assistance could only be hoped for, if the reform sought for was important enough to engage the interests of the foreign state. A mere reform of the Irish Parliament and franchise for Catholics was of no vital interest to France; a separation of Ireland from England was a great one. Thus the United leaders reasoned: “Shall we, between two objects, confine ourselves to the least valuable, especially when it is just as difficult to obtain?” They further argued that, by the principles of the Constitution as established by the English Revolution of 1688, they were justified in calling in foreign aid, and in “resisting a government which had forfeited all claims to obedience.”

The societies gradually extended to all the counties of Ulster and to very many parts of the South. An end to strife, quarrelling, and intoxication in all public places—fairs, markets, and social gatherings where the United Irishmen met—marked the influence of the Union of Irishmen. The new harmony in face of common grievances was universal. From Munster, we hear the voice of a Gaelic poet, and a United Irishman, Mícheál Og O’Longáin, calling upon his countrymen to unite:

*“ Má's Sacsanac féin é nó Quaker cruaidh, na  
glacai gí féin leis, éad no fuath,  
Ach preabaidh le cheile, in éineacht suas, a  
túrnadh Danar dóibh.”*

“ Whether he be a Protestant or hard Quaker, bear him neither envy nor hate, but rise up and together overthrow the enemy.”

The new friendship of Catholic and Protestant, together with rumours of a French invasion, confirmed the increasing fears of Pitt and Castlereagh, and determined them to foment disunion.

James Hope, the Artisan of the North, and one of the bravest of the “ United Men,” often refers to the fear of the enemy at Irish Unity. “ Our enemies trembled at the prospect of unanimity, they insinuated themselves among the people, and even some of them joined the association. These were the parties who were mainly instrumental in deluding the people into conspiracy . . . and urging them to consent to attempt with a handful of men what in reality they knew would have required a considerable and well-provided force . . . We had traitors in our camp, from the beginning to the close of the career of our society.”

#### 4.

WHILE affairs in the country were fast approaching a climax and the Government was secretly



fomenting rebellion, Robert Emmet was still ostensibly giving most of his time to science and chemistry. He was a silent student except when his strong national feeling was roused at college debates.

Thomas Addis had thrown himself heart and soul into the movement. In 1792 he had publicly identified himself with the patriot party by his brilliant defence of Napper Tandy, questioning even the validity of the Viceroy's appointment. Three years later, when defending some prisoners charged with administering the oath of the United Irishmen, Thomas Addis read the forbidden test aloud, and in the court of justice publicly swore himself into the Society! Since then he had worked might and main, while on circuit, to organise the different branches of the Society throughout the country. In January, 1797, he was appointed a member of the Leinster Directory of United Irishmen.

Robert was often present at the meetings in his brother's house, next door to Dr. Emmet's, in Stephen's Green. There he heard Russell tell of the Orange atrocities in the North, where the Peep-o'-Day Boys had organised themselves, under the name of Orangemen, as a political machine to oppose the union of Irishmen and to secure a Protestant ascendancy. Their cruelties, now systematically practised, were sanctioned by "The Insurrection" and "Indemnity" Acts, passed by the Irish Parliament in 1796. The

“Insurrection Act” gave to magistrates unlimited powers to arrest, imprison, and search houses for arms. The “Indemnity Act” protected offending magistrates from the consequences of their illegal outrages. Together with accounts of the Armagh persecutions, Robert heard reports from the South of the “free quarters,” pitch-cappings, floggings, and of the thousands of Irishmen seized by the Press Gang and sent, without trial, or on false charges, on board English naval vessels.

At Trinity, Robert’s reputation as a future orator was established when, early in 1798, he made his maiden speech at the famous Historical Society. The question for debate was: “Is Complete Freedom of Discussion essential to the Wellbeing of a Good and Virtuous Government?” The hopes of those sympathetic in national outlook were centred on Robert, and all watched him as he rose to speak. He was tall and slender. Before he spoke his face had a gravity with something of sadness in it; but when speaking the thoughts found vivid expression in his face; every enthusiasm of his made its mark there. His whole strength was a nervous strength, allied to quickness, and, in argument, naturally speeding towards its objective. In his speaking there was something of inspiration, and so little was there between his idea and its expression, that his words seemed inevitable.

At this time, allusion to modern politics was

forbidden in the Historical Society. Robert kept to the terms of the rule while he adroitly proceeded to show the necessity and advantage of "Freedom of Discussion." His argument was replied to by an able orator. Again Robert rose, and in his answers to the objections of his opponent, made a powerful impromptu speech; among his concluding remarks he said: "If a government were vicious enough to put down freedom of discussion, it would be the duty of the people to deliberate on the errors of their rulers, to consider well the wrongs they inflicted and what the right course would be for their subjects to take, and having done so it would then be their duty to draw practical conclusions." There is something ominous in the conclusion of this speech; how it must have echoed in the academic quiet of Trinity. Few there realised how near it was to fact—how soon these words would, in the life of the boy who uttered them, be put to the test.

## 5.

THE leaders of the "United Men" were active. Robert was their messenger. He carried dispatches from Thomas Addis to Russell, messages concerning organisation, and instructions for the procuring of arms. The latest bulletin from Tone was often in his charge. Tone, after his banishment in 1794, had gone

from America to France, where he had so engaged the interests of Carnot and the French Directory that they had undertaken the preparation of a great expedition for the emancipation of Ireland.

In December, 1796, excitement in Dublin was intense, when news came that Bantry Bay was filled with foreign masts. The crisis, however, was of short duration. The great squadron, comprising forty-three sail, carrying nearly fourteen thousand veterans of the French Army, had, by stress of weather, been reduced to ten. The ship bearing General Hoche, heart and soul of the enterprise, was missing, and as no landing orders had been received by the Admiral, he, with the small and battered remnant of his fleet, after tacking about for six days, and within half a mile of the shore, was forced to abandon the attempt and make his way back to Brest.

In Ireland the Bantry scare was the signal to the Government for a reign of terror, countenanced and connived at by Lords Clare, Castle-reagh and Carhampton. Lord Carhampton, Commander of the Army, was responsible for the system of picketings, free quarters for the militia, half-hangings, and pitch-cappings that from 1796 to 1798 racked the whole of Ireland. During these years oppression was protected, injustice legalised, cruelty indemnified. "Every crime, every cruelty, that could be committed by

Cossacks or Calmucks, has been committed here," wrote General Abercrombie, sent in 1798 as Commander-in-Chief.

In the summer of 1797 news again came from Tone, who had obtained the promise of assistance from the Batavian Republic. "The Dutch Government has thrown itself '*à corps perdu*,'" he wrote. "They venture no less than the whole of their army and navy." But the great expedition had hardly left the coast of Holland when at Camperdown she encountered the British Fleet. The Dutch Admiral, De Winter, put up a gallant fight, but was overpowered, with severe loss, by the superior British ships. Ireland was again left to her own resources.

About this time Robert was appointed secretary to one of the four committees of United Irishmen in Trinity. The number of students being enrolled in the Society was increasing. Junior fellows were lending their rooms for meetings of the disaffected; undergraduates, forbidden to express their sentiments, published anonymous articles and poems in the "Press."

It was as a result of one of these letters "To the Students of Trinity," that, in April, 1798, Lord Clare made a visit to the college, in order to investigate and put a stop to the increasing sedition.

When the doors of the great dining hall had closed on the whole assembly of the college, Lord Clare ordered the roll to be read. Some

names were unanswered. Several of the undergraduates, and even junior fellows, were called before the Chancellor, charged with treasonable practices, and examined upon oath. Emmet, on being summoned, wrote to the Board of Fellows denouncing the tyranny of demanding on oath information tending to compromise fellow-students, and asked that his name be removed from the register. He had first shown the letter to his father, who had given his entire approval.

A few days later, Thomas Moore informed Robert that he was the author of the offending letter. Emmet answered that it was a good letter, but that it was unfortunate that public attention had been drawn to the politics of the University, as such was bound to frustrate the progress of their good work, which did best hidden.

A few days later Robert's name appeared in the list of expelled students. His expulsion was deeply resented by his comrades and by the large circle of his family's friends. Many felt that the injustice of cutting him off from career or profession was due to the fact that his father and brother were marked men.

Dr. Emmet, no longer in sympathy with the Government, had resigned his position as State Physician. A few weeks earlier, Thomas Addis had been arrested with the other principal United Irish leaders.

Robert's expulsion made definite his popularity among the poor of Dublin. His mother had been

a benefactress to many of them and they already knew him, but his expulsion from Trinity made him, in their eyes, a partisan of their hopes and aims.

He was only a boy, and youthful heroism is always dear to the people. They will be loyal to heroism when they disdain power. Heroism can draw hearts that wealth and ostentation leave cold. Loyalty and heroism have often laid the foundation of a leader's power.

## CHAPTER IV.

“WHETHER OR NOT, LET US DIE IN THIS  
FAITH.”

### I.

THE great, prematurely exploded rebellion of '98 was over. Lord Fitzwilliam, the only Viceroy who had given hope to the Catholics, or who had dared to oppose “The Castle,” had been recalled suddenly in 1795. The greatest of the leaders, all of whom had sought to restrain the people until the time was ripe, were in prison; Lord Edward was dead; the people of North and South, maddened to resistance, had risen without foreign aid. The terror was at its height. Orangemen were desolating the countryside; courts martial and special commissions were daily sending the flower of Irishmen to the scaffold.

In September, 1798, Tone had succeeded in a final effort to get help from France. But ill-luck again overtook the French Fleet; the ships were scattered by the elements. Tone was arrested and hurried to Dublin; he was dead before the French authorities could intervene on his behalf, as Adjutant-General in the French Army.

Such was the situation when, in order to stop



the civil and military executions, Thomas Addis Emmet, Dr. MacNevin and Arthur O'Connor, imprisoned members of the Leinster Directory of the United Irishmen, decided to make a compact with the Government. They had little to bargain with, for the Government, through her system of spies, was already in possession of the chief facts regarding the internal state of the Organisation. But there were many lives to save, and a truce would give the leaders a chance of vindicating the just claims and motives of the United Irishmen. As a result of the compact the executions were stopped, and the leaders, still in prison, were offered liberty in America. But at the end of a year, instead of the promised freedom they were moved to the English garrison town of Fort George, in Invernesshire.

On the eve of their departure, and when their destination was still unknown, Mary Anne Emmet, the only sister of Thomas Addis and Robert, went to Dublin Castle and demanded an interview with the Viceroy. Lord Cornwallis was struck by her evident strength of character and by her earnestness and anxiety; he promised that no harm should befall her brother, Thomas Addis; but that "the apprehension of a meditated descent on Ireland had rendered it necessary to move the State prisoners to a place of security." Next morning Thomas Addis said good-bye to his family; never again to set foot in Ireland.

There is no record of the part that Robert Emmet played in the '98 rebellion; his youth, the arrest of leaders in Dublin, the impossibility of an armed revolt in the city prevented him seeing active service. But we know that he was heart and soul in the movement, and that the atrocities committed on the people during the terror had made a deep and lasting impression on his sensitive mind. Daily he had witnessed the toll of victims executed on the waste patch at Arbour Hill, and had seen their wholesale burial in the Croppies' Hole. Stray bits of verse express his agony for the sufferings of the people, his longings to see them free.

*"O Sacred Justice, free this land  
From Tyranny abhorred;  
Resume thy balance and thy seat  
Resume, but sheathe thy sword.*

*No retribution should we seek,  
Too long had horror reigned;  
By mercy marked may Freedom rise,  
By cruelty unstained."*

Early in 1800, Robert went to see his brother at Fort George. He found the prisoners well treated, but discontented because of the Government's breach of faith. He was also distressed to hear that a quarrel had arisen between his brother and Arthur O'Connor. Even the prisoners had taken sides in the unfortunate indifference; the affair was about to end in a duel

had not Robert's timely intervention and his wonderful way of bringing about peace restored, at least, a temporary friendship.

2.

WHEN Robert got back to Dublin he found that measures for bringing about the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland were in full progress. As far back as 1759, the British Ministry had contemplated such a union to completely quench the then faint flicker of Irish nationalism. In 1799, the plot secretly hatched in London had been rejected by the Irish Parliament. Now, every means that the cunning mind of Castle-reagh could devise was used to consummate the unnatural union. The country was under martial law; all discussion of the subject of the union was forbidden; protest assemblies and meetings of the people were dispersed by the soldiers. Lord Cornwallis had been sent over as Viceroy with the necessary millions and dishonourable honours to bribe men into the surrender of their rights.

During the long debates in the House of Commons, Robert sat in the gallery listening in pained silence to the men who were selling his country. With eyes that scarcely believed what they saw, he watched the last Division, and noted that of the 163 who voted for the Union, 116 were placemen, many of whom had not a foot of land in Ireland. Only seven were unbribed.

Three months later, Robert left Ireland, accompanied by Malachy Delany, who had played an active part in '98. At Hamburg they got passports from General Augereau, Commander of the French Army on the Lower Rhine. After a short visit to Paris Robert spent the greater part of the next two years in Switzerland, Holland and Spain, seeing much, reading much, thinking much, not yet taking an active part in revolutionary propaganda. He then returned to Paris, waiting for news of his brother's release from Fort George.

By the Treaty of Amiens, in March, 1802, England was forced to recognise the French Republic and all her conquests, at least provisionally. Napoleon, lacking a navy, found the Treaty convenient, since it could be easily broken if the interests of France demanded. Both countries were quietly recommencing preparations for war. British spies reported the growing naval armament of France; accounts arrived in London of flat-bottomed vessels being prepared for the transport of troops, with positive information of the various places where the invading armies were expected to land.

Paris, at the same time, was the rendezvous for Irish refugees, exiles who had fled from the Terror, leaders and officers who had managed to escape the vigilance of Government spies, and finally the group of State prisoners released after four years' imprisonment. Chief among them

were Thomas Addis Emmet, Dr. MacNevin, and Arthur O'Connor. These leaders, known in Dublin Castle "as being capable of raising all Ireland," were considered so dangerous that their return to Ireland was forbidden and their movements on the Continent closely watched.

During the autumn and winter of that year, the Irish circle met at the house of a Mrs. Delany, and in one or two other homes sympathetic to Ireland. Feeling was running high. The Legislative Union, together with the failure on the part of the Government to keep faith with the prisoners, led many to believe that they were justified in renewing the effort for freedom.

The important leaders of the late rebellion were welcome at social and political reunions. Among them Thomas Russell cut a dashing figure; after the rigours of prison life, he took delight in renewing his interests among the Parisian literati and scientists. William Hamilton, too, was popular, a fair, slender officer in the uniform of the French Army. Both Hamilton and Russell had been close friends of Tone and were among his companions on that last visit to MacArt's Fort, on the Cave Hill, where all had made a solemn vow, never to desist in their efforts until they had subverted the authority of England and asserted the independence of Ireland. Colonel Lawless, too, was often of the company, and William Dowdall, just escaped from Dublin. Dowdall caused no small interest, because he bore

the latest reports from Ireland, and had been in close connection with the remarkable Despard Plot.

About the year 1800, a secret movement had been started in England to bring about a revolution in Great Britain and Ireland. The plot was discovered when the leader, Colonel Despard, a distinguished British officer, was arrested and hanged on charge of high treason. The Despard affair caused great interest among the refugees, who had hoped that by co-operation with the British revolutionaries the independence of Ireland might have been secured. William Dowdall had been sent by the Irish in Paris to London to get in touch with Despard, and from there he went to Ireland, whence after a brief sojourn and through his indiscretion he was forced to fly. He returned to Paris with news of the suppression of the Despard Plot and of his having to abandon the preparations for re-arming Ireland.

### 3.

IN the Irish colony Robert found that his reputation had gone before him. People were talking about his national activities as a student in the University, of his outstanding ability, but especially of his expulsion from the College. All were drawn by his sympathetic expression and by the ardent enthusiasm of his conversation. Many were surprised at the sense and gravity of one so young, and wondered why he never came

to social functions or to the brilliant balls of General Berthier, to which many of the Irish were invited.

Reports from Ireland were now reaching Paris. Discontent with the Union was universal. The people were again ready to rise. Prominent men, who had been trusted in '98, sent promises of support in arms and money; while the prospect of war between France and England was considered by many of the leaders in Paris an opportunity not to be missed for a renewal of the struggle.

Robert, too, was revolving all these things in his mind; he was constantly in the company of those who favoured the idea of a new effort, and his revolutionary principles were inevitably impelled towards action.

From Talleyrand, French Minister of the Exterior, he got the assurance that, in the event of war, a descent would be made on the West Coast of England from Ireland, which would first be declared a republic. Napoleon, whom he also approached, gave him further hope, although at first he seemed to assume that the Irish had grown careless about their independence. It may have been, that the disunion among the Irish leaders gave the First Consul little proof that Ireland would use freedom with advantage, or it may have been that Napoleon's increasing imperialism had little sympathy with the ardent republicanism of the Irish.

However, in their last interview, Napoleon assured Robert that hostilities would begin in May, 1803, and that the landing of troops would take place in August. On that promise Emmet based his hopes, and decided that 1803 was to be the fated year, with or without French aid.

Robert spent much of his time seeking out the most reliable leaders of the late rebellion then in Paris. With Russell and Hamilton he discussed the causes that militated against the success of '98. Many of the leaders then trusted were men who demanded too much security, and were not prepared to risk either person or property; the extent of the organisation made it unwieldy; and its ramifications offered an easy shelter for spies. These facts decided him on basing the new revolution on a more trustworthy basis.

Robert, at the same time, was making a close study of the most authentic works on guerilla warfare. Colonel Templehoff's *History of the Seven Years' War*, a *Treatise on Winter Posts*, by the Hon. Colonel Lindsay, and Volney's *Ruins of Empires* formed part of his reading during these months in Paris. Volney, a true lover of liberty, had been released from prison only after the fall of Robespierre. At the moment he was in Paris, a frequent guest in French diplomatic circles!

Lord Cloncurry was also in Paris at this time and in touch with the leaders who put forward the idea of a new attempt. For many years he



had been intimate with the Emmets, through his connection with the United Irishmen. It was at Cloncurry's house that, in November, 1802, the brothers dined on the eve of Robert's departure for Ireland. Irish affairs were discussed by the "United Men" present. Robert spoke with confidence and enthusiasm on a renewal of the effort. And in that mood of confidence and enthusiasm he left France for Ireland to put his principles to the final test of action.

## CHAPTER V.

### PREPARATION.

#### I.

TWO years of union with Great Britain had done little to ameliorate conditions in Ireland. Memories of the terror were still fresh in the minds of the people and only served to intensify their hatred of the Government which they held responsible for their suffering. Even the Yeomen, so ruthless in their suppression of the late rebellion, were louder than others in voicing their abuse of Government and their dissatisfaction with the Union. Many were heard to declare openly that, in the event of another rising, they would not again give assistance.

A broken remnant of the once powerful "United Men" remained; many of them still lived in hope that another opportunity might be given them to venture all for their country. There were yet many names prominently associated with the late rebellion, the bearers of them, men of influence and position; but these Emmet did not feel impelled to seek out, for, without exception, they were not cast in a heroic mould, and wanted too many chances in their favour before venturing on revolution—as the '98 had proved. It might

chance, in the end, that his plan for the Rising might come to be no more than a forlorn hope; half-heartedness would imperil the safety of all, because it would cause weakness in the greatest crisis.

James Hope, who since '98 had been working quietly at his loom in the weaving district of the Coombe, was one of those who felt that their obligation to the Society had not yet been fulfilled. Hope, with Russell and Thomas Addis, understood, perhaps better than any of the other leaders, that the unrest in Ireland was due to the condition of the labouring classes. They realised that there could be no solid foundation for liberty until measures were adopted that went to the root of the evil.

In the spring of 1803, Hope got a note asking him to walk on a certain evening between Roper's Rest and Harold's Cross, and that there he would meet a friend. As he walked along the basin of the Canal, he saw coming towards him, at a quick pace, a tall young man looking earnest and intent as he tapped the ground with his cane. It was Robert Emmet. Hope had not expected to find such obvious maturity in the face of a youth of twenty-four; he had not thought to see an expression so pleasing and yet so distinguished. The gentle dark eyes and the clear pallor of the complexion might have been almost feminine, he thought, but for the incisive strength in the whole face.

When Emmet had returned to Ireland a few months earlier, and found that there was a warrant out for his arrest, he had remained quietly at Miltown with his parents until his father's death in December, 1802.

In this, the first of the many interviews between the two patriots, Emmet consulted Hope as to the possibility of a fresh effort, of a new and successful rising in the event of a French landing. He had been invited over, he told Hope, by some of the first men in the land, who had also promised support in men and money. Robert's father had left him in his will £1,000; this would be something to start with. As they talked, Hope made it clear that he was ready for "an appeal to arms," and Emmet replied that his "plan was formed." On this they parted; two, at least, earnest still in the pursuit of Irish Independence. Among the "United Men" Emmet at once began his work of gathering up the broken threads of that once close-knit web. His initial purpose was to get into touch with officers who had escaped detection; to this end he went to see Miles Byrne, who had led men well in '98. Emmet found Byrne at Booterstown, near Blackrock, where he was slowly convalescing after the hardships and disappointments of the last campaign. Byrne was still "on his keeping" from the vigilance of the "Castle," and superintending, at the same time, a building scheme for his step-brother, Edward Kennedy.

In the garden, behind the office and timber yard, Emmet unfolded his plan. He told Byrne of the renewed hopes of the leaders still in Paris, and asked him to put him in touch with all those who had escaped in the late war, and who continued still to enjoy the confidence of the people. He pointed out that their justification for taking the field was a double one, now that not even a vestige of self-government existed and seven-eighths of the people were left without the right of sending a representative even to a foreign Parliament. Together they went over Byrne's list of the reliable men in Carlow, Wicklow and Wexford, and Emmet arranged to see them individually.

Finally he pointed out to Byrne the necessity of getting Russell, Hamilton and Quigley back from France. It was important that Russell, who had been General for Antrim, should go North to sound Antrim and Down, establish a council of war at Belfast, and from there establish connection with Dublin. Counsellor Hamilton, well known and popular in Fermanagh and Cavan, was the most suitable to raise these counties. Michael Quigley, who had taken an active part in the Kildare rising, could best report on conditions there.

Good news came from Wicklow. Michael Dwyer, one of the few leaders who had not been caught, had remained concealed in the mountain glens during the intervening years—a hero of

marvellous adventures, still living in the hope of a fresh attempt.

In all, nineteen counties promised help, on condition that Dublin should take the lead. Emmet's idea was suddenly to overpower the Government, take possession of the key positions in Dublin, and then, with authority, signal for the country to rise. "The powerful, persuasive language and sound reason of Mr. Emmet," writes Byrne, "left it impossible for any Irishman, impressed with a desire for his country's independence, to make any objection to his plans."

Courage, hope, and enthusiasm returned wherever he made his appeal. At the merchant's store in Crow Street he found in Philip Long one of his staunchest supporters. Level-headed and sound in council, Long was also rich and generous; and, when the money promised by many was not forthcoming, he contributed freely to the leader's small funds. To Long, Emmet gave the important charge of purchasing materials for the manufacture of military stores.

## 2.

ALTHOUGH Russell's return caused alarm in Dublin Castle, the Government, so far, had no definite information of the new plot. But in the spring of 1803, when it became apparent that the renewal of hostilities between England and France was inevitable, the Viceroy, Lord

Hardwicke, was advised by the British Minister to find out the state of feeling in Ireland.

In one of his careful letters to London, his Excellency writes: "There is no reason to believe that any regular system of disaffection exists; though it is probable that many would join and assist an invading force."

During the following months, all reports to the Castle, from Magistrates and Peers, give similar testimony. From Galway, Lord Ashton writes that there is no sign of organisation in these parts, and that there is little fear of a rising, "until the French should land in considerable force, and even, in that case, they will be cautious how they join them."

In May, England declared war on France. A few days later General Fox arrived in Ireland as Commander-in-Chief of the forces.

From May until July, Government spies, idle since '98, begin to revisit old haunts and move among the farmers and labourers at fairs and in drinking houses. The Viceroy's post-bag begins to swell with secret intelligence, reports and accounts from informers and spies, but in all cases the information is vague and indefinite.

From Belfast, Samuel Turner, who had betrayed the Ulster Executive in '98, and who had been in constant correspondence with Pitt during his confinement at Fort George, continues to give the Government information. "The idea of a general insurrection," he writes, "has spread

much through both counties (Antrim and Down) . . . from the minds at present of the people, they will wait the result of the attack on Dublin. I repeat again that the only and principal allegation here in not turning out is the want of arms."

Pitt, for many years, had chosen as his secret agents in Ireland men who could pose as adherents to the cause on which they were designed to spy. Thus, the arch informer was Leonard MacNally, known as the Incorruptible. In '98, MacNally had acted as legal adviser to the Directory of the "United Men," and was employed by them as leading counsel at the State trials. For the secrets of his briefs, which he sold to the Crown, he received a pension of £300 per annum. During these months of 1803 his renewed activities were foiled by Emmet's reticence and care; for he writes: "I daily see different people from the Home Circuit counties, who were implicated in the last Rebellion, and the report of them all is that there is neither system nor organisation in the country. They, however, allow that invasion is expected; in which case they admit a rising would take place whenever the enemy appeared"; and again: "Meath and Kildare continue to retain the strongest symptoms of disaffection which I impute to their vicinity to the metropolis. Among the lower orders, and I have had innumerable conversations with those in whom I could confide, I find but one opinion,



which is that the military are too strong for the peasantry, unless the French made a landing in great force. In that case I have no doubt but a great majority would join them in their march; but it appears to me a settled determination that the people would not rise, but where the French appeared. I am also convinced that there are still great quantities of concealed arms, but from the length of time that they have lain by, most probably in damp places, the firearms can be of little use."



## CHAPTER VI.

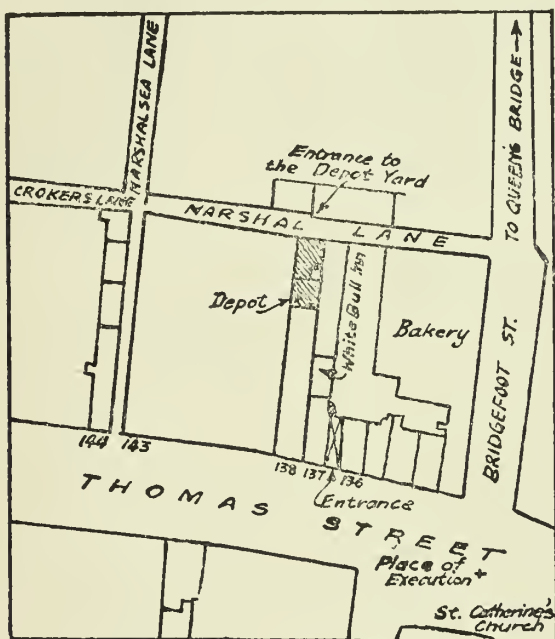
### THE DUBLIN ORGANIZATION.

#### I.

DURING the hot weather of June and July there was an unusual stir at the White Bull Inn, off Thomas Street. Custom increased; farmers, artisans and countrymen remained long over their pewter mugs, commenting on the outbreak of war, criticising the Government, and discussing the destination of Napoleon's next expedition.

From round the corner on the left came the constant rattle of wheels, jolting over the cobbles. Covered cars and cartloads of timber passed down Bridgefoot Street, turned left up Marshal Lane to the rear of the Inn, where they stopped, and were briskly unloaded opposite a large warehouse, on whose wide gate "Malt Stores" was painted in big letters. These workmen had strange passwords before gaining admission through the gate. "Are you firm?" the door-keeper asked. "I am determined," came the invariable reply. Inside, there was the industry of a hive. In one part men were busy transforming boards of red deal and white ash into pike handles; others busily took the planed shafts and fitted them into shining steel blades; the result

being a deadly jointed weapon which, when folded, could be easily concealed in a man's great coat; in another department, ball cartridges were loaded and ingredients mixed for rocket-



THE THOMAS STREET DEPOT.

tubes and hand-grenades. Still others were employed in unpacking and examining blunderbusses and pocket pistols from the covered cars. The men worked quietly, all skilled artisans, each carrying on his own business, regard-

less of his neighbour, tireless and intent. Emmet's active figure moved from group to group, giving instructions and encouragement, directing each branch of the work, supervising the making, and testing the results of the labour.

This arsenal was one of the ten depots which Emmet had taken for the storing of military supplies and for the manufacture of arms and ammunition. Others were concealed in Patrick Street, Smithfield, Winetavern Street, and at Irishtown. Such was the secrecy maintained that the men who worked in one depot were unaware of the existence of the others.

In Patrick Street a depot had been leased by John MacIntosh, a Scottish patriot, who, eager to show his sympathy with Ireland, had offered his services to Emmet. This building was given over to the manufacture of powder and chemical mixtures for rockets and hand-grenades, Emmet's own invention. When the place became congested with extra workmen and with the rapidly increasing stores, the chief, ever inventive, suggested building concealed cupboards in the walls. The work was soon completed by Quigley and MacIntosh. At the release of a spring, a secret door, cleverly formed of bricks built in a frame, swung slowly out and revealed a tier of little rooms, which communicated by trap doors and scaling ladders with the rest of the building. Here was space enough to conceal forty men.

Since the beginning of spring, Emmet had been

staying in lodgings at Harold's Cross ; but early in June, under the name of Robert Ellis, he leased a house in Butterfield Lane, Rathfarnham, in order to ensure a safe retreat for the increasing number of his colleagues, many of whom were proscribed men. The new retreat was a handsome two-storey building, surrounded by green fields, and standing back from the road, admirably suited to the necessary seclusion of the revolutionaries.

2.

DURING these months of preparation, Hope was the constant companion of Emmet. Together they walked back from the depots to Rathfarnham, Hope reporting on the progress made and getting further instructions for work and for the dispatch of arms to various parts of the country. During these weeks, Emmet became aware of social theories in Hope of which he did not altogether approve. The people were wronged and degraded by their landlords, but in Emmet's opinion nothing could be gained by attacking the fundamental right to private property. Hope had no such reverence for what seemed, to Emmet, immutable laws imposed by nature on the social structure.

The Provisional Government, Emmet said, would take the property of the country under its protection, and punish with the utmost rigour any person who should violate that property and

thereby injure the resources and future prosperity of Ireland. He would embody this idea in their initial proclamation. Religious disqualifications were another of the many oppressions which the reformers intended to remove. "One grand point," said Emmet, "at least will be gained—no leading Catholic is committed, we are all Protestants and the Catholic Cause will not be compromised . . . We fight, that all of us may have our country; and that done, each of us shall have our religion."

County Committees, with high sheriff and sub-sheriffs, to execute their orders, were to take charge of the civil direction of the counties; in their hands would be the care of the national property and the preservation of order and justice. From the date of the establishment of the Provisional Government all tithes were to be abolished and the rents for property were to be paid to the County Committees until the establishment of the National Government and the organisation of the Courts of Justice.

Russell and Hamilton returned from their mission full of enthusiasm, and gave satisfactory accounts of successful meetings in the northern counties. Quigley, too, guaranteed that the Kildare men were ready.

The French descent was expected in August. Time was getting short. At an important meeting of the Executive, held at Rathfarnham, Emmet detailed his plan for the insurrection and

for the establishment of a free and independent republic.

The plan, he explained, to be carried out simultaneously with a French landing, was divided into three parts—Points of Attack, Points of Check, and Lines of Defence. He had studied his ground well. On the map of Dublin spread out before him he detailed his plan to his officers. The Castle, the Pigeon House Fort, and Island Bridge Barracks were to be the three main points of attack.

To Branagan, of Irishtown, and a few picked men he gave instructions to attack the Pigeon House at low water, seize the sentries, and open the gates for the waiting band of Wexford men. The old fort captured, the victors were to fire a rocket as a signal for the attempt on the Castle and Barracks. The gates of Dublin Castle would be open all day; the building itself was only half garrisoned; and Emmet arranged that, at a given hour, he with five others should drive in hackney coaches through the upper gate, into the Castle yard, overpower the guard, and obtain an entry. Miles Byrne and his party, on the given signal, were to march in and seize the Lord Lieutenant and principal officers of the Government. These, together with the bulk of the artillery, were to go under armed escort to Wicklow.

The attack planned for Island Bridge Barracks was of a similar nature. A successful attempt on

the Barracks would give the insurgents access to the enemy cannon and a large supply of arms.

To the anxious group of men who listened, Emmet further pointed out the Old Custom House and Mary Street Barracks as the Points of Check, and Beresford Street with its six openings as the Lines of Defence. The openings were to be blockaded with overturned coaches and double chains, thereby forcing the troops to march towards the Castle. Emmet emphasised the necessity of this manœuvre, and appointed bodies of men to guard the various streets and cut off the military in the flank and rear.

As the complicated but logical scheme to get possession of Dublin gradually became unfolded, the officers understood for the first time the value of the double chains and explosive street beams. They also realised the gravity of their enterprise and the ability and ingenuity of their leader. Confidence increased.

Only the leaders who had taken an active part in the last rebellion were informed of what was intended. Their instructions were to prepare and hold in readiness their own contingents until the French should come.

The days and the weeks sped by. The secret organisation slowly spread. Work in the depots went on apace. Daily the stacks of pike blades mounted on high. The pile of pistols, purchased quietly and smuggled into the depots, increased in bulk. Above all, the rockets, tested one day



in the lonely field at Rathtarnham, proved, to the inventor's delight, a great success.

### 3.

EMMET, from July onwards, eagerly awaited word from Paris, where Thomas Addis, the accredited agent of the United Irishmen, was moving might and main to hasten the expedition. The British Government in Ireland had no definite information. All seemed well.

But one day a slight accident occurred; it was a mere act of carelessness, but it threw into disorder the careful plans of the leader. Where so much depended on secrecy, the least accident might prove fatal.

On Saturday, July 16, while Michael McDaniel, one of the workers in Patrick Street, was engaged in making fuses for the rockets, a spark alighted on some loose powder and caused a terrific explosion. The men were thrown to the ground, some of them badly hurt. Part of the building burst into flames. Outside a crowd was quickly forming. People banged at the door to discover the cause of the fire.

John McIntosh, with his usual sang-froid, hastened to the window, threw it open, and leaning forth addressed the crowd. Some of the chemicals used for dye-making had exploded, he explained. He assured the people that no help was necessary and politely urged them to dis-

perse; then he closed the window and turned to give instructions within. He sent one man for a doctor and helped the others to remove all traces of the disaster.

The secret rooms proved invaluable for storing what remained of the vast quantities of bullets, powder, pikes, rockets and grenades.

Emmet, informed of the mishap, returned immediately to town. The building he saw was of no further use as an arsenal; a police inspection was bound to take place any moment; he advised that all the stores should be removed that night. When young Denis Redmond, another of Emmet's colleagues, heard of the disaster, he at once offered his own recently bought house on the Coal Quay as a hiding place for the stores. That night when the city had gone to rest, and the last echo of passing footsteps had died away, Miles Byrne, with some of his most reliable men, emerged from the still smoking depot, laden with the first consignment of arms. Back and forward they plied in groups of two and three. By dawn, everything fit for use was safely deposited in the new depot, except one large cask of cartridges. A young volunteer hoisted the cask on his shoulders and offered to make the last trip alone. Day was advancing. As he hastened round a corner with the heavy load, he marched straight into a batch of night-watchmen. A scuffle ensued; the heavy cask was thrown to the ground and burst its contents. At that moment, Byrne

and his comrades, hearing the noise, hurried up, and seeing what had happened addressed the watchmen and boldly asserted their authority; the latter took the newcomers for cut-throats and smugglers; taking fright they dumped the damaged barrel in the street and scampered off.

Next day, when Major Sirr and the city police forced the locked doors of the dye-factory, they found the place derelict. Damaged walls and broken glass told them little; a curious object, however, standing in the middle of the room, attracted their attention. It was the powder-mill, an old machine once used for bruising oats, too large to fit through the secret trap door and too unwieldy to remove; it stood there stark among the debris. As the major moved over to examine it, he stumbled over what he thought was a fallen brick; he stooped and picked up a leather-bound volume with the significant title, "The Ruins: A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires"!

#### 4.

To Emmet and the Executive this unfortunate affair suggested the immediate discovery of the plot. Two courses remained open—to postpone the attempt indefinitely or to strike immediately before the Government had time to take action. At a General Council of the Executive, called in haste, the latter plan was decided upon. Emmet announced that the Rebellion must take place one

week later, on the evening of the 23rd of July. Each officer received his orders and departed to his appointed county to be in readiness for the signal from Dublin.

Russell, disguised as a horse-dealer, prepared to go North; in his anxiety that Antrim and Down should this time excel, he begged of the Chief the advantage of Hope's company. Emmet complied with his wish, but in the departure of Russell and Hope he saw the loss of two of his most experienced officers and staunchest friends.

Arthur Devlin, though not so well known to the Dublin working classes, was chosen to take Hope's place as their leader in the attack from Costigan's Mills. Hamilton, who had seen good service in the French Army, departed to lead the men of Cavan and Fermanagh. Nicholas Gray, who had fought at Vinegar Hill, hastened to inform the people of Wexford; while John Athy set out on the long journey to Galway.

Miles Byrne, in charge of an important Dublin section, spent the last seven days going through the city, informing the subordinate leaders of the appointed date, and arranging the rendezvous for Saturday night.

Emmet sent word to Wicklow where Dwyer daily scanned the Dublin road for a messenger. Word also reached the Kildare men; their orders were to arrive in small parties at the Thomas

Street depot, whence they were to follow Emmet in the main attack on the Castle.

The Lord Lieutenant, meanwhile, had thought it prudent to inform the Prime Minister of what had taken place in Patrick Street. In his long report to Addington, written three days before the Rebellion, he states that accounts of "the disaffected" are not so favourable, but "it still appears that there are no leaders of any consequence . . . Agitators are certainly at work, and there is reason to believe, whenever an opportunity offers of striking a blow, that the Metropolis will be the principal object of insurrection." He suggests, however, for the prevention of mischief, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, "for it can hardly be expected," he wisely continues, "that disaffection should have entirely ceased in this country, or that the enemy should not use every means to revive it."

At the same time the Viceroy, ever wary, also sent a hurried despatch to General Fox, who was on a tour of inspection in the West, surveying military preparations in case of a descent on the coast of Mayo. The Commander arrived in Dublin on the night of July 22 and called by appointment next day at the Viceregal Lodge. They had hardly sat down to discuss matters when the Viceroy was handed a rather alarming note from Marsden, the Under Secretary, urging his Excellency and General Fox to hasten to Dublin Castle. On their arrival there, in the late

afternoon, Marsden described to them how a Mr. Clarke, of Palmerstown, owner of the Dye-works in that village, had brought him information several times, and had just been in to report the strange and unsettled behaviour of his workmen. They had stopped work that day, long before the usual hour, and were seen to hang about in groups, earnest in conversation. All were dressed in their Sunday clothes, when they should have been to their elbows in dye. They had also demanded their wages in the morning instead of in the evening. Clarke was furious, and had told them that their plot was discovered and that he would immediately report to the Castle.

Notwithstanding the various warnings, nothing could convince the Government that an attack on the Castle was meditated. The most important leaders of '98 were still on the Continent. They knew of no others. The Castle was close to the Barracks in Parliament Street, and the Royal Barracks, where the bulk of the garrison was stationed, was not far off on the other side of the river.

General Fox, however, sent directions to the military in the various Barracks and Guard-rooms to hold themselves in readiness in case of any disturbance during the night. He also sent orders to his officers to come to Kilmainham for instructions at 9.15 p.m.

Marsden arranged to sleep in the Castle that night, but the Viceroy, still sceptical, returned to

the Viceregal Lodge, passing on his way Bridge-foot Street, off which was Marshal Lane, where already the revolutionaries were assembling. At half-past seven, a trusted messenger who was sent out from the depot to procure money, walked through the Castle Yard. All was quiet and silent. The gates were open wide.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ABORTIVE RISING OF 1803.

#### I.

THE 23rd of July had been a hot day in Dublin. The sun had set and left a slow trail of crimson fire along the West, over the Liffey. A great quiet had settled down on the city; the lamps were being lit; most folks had gone indoors. It was only in the poorer area of Thomas Street, with its debouching alleys, Vicar Street and Cut-Purse Row, around the Market House, that the noisy hum of life could still be heard. Saturday night vendors were disposing loudly of their last wares. The taverns were full.

Towards nine o'clock, groups of countrymen in grey frieze coats might be seen approaching Thomas Street; to Heavy's house in Thomas Court numbers quietly made their way; for others the meeting places were Rourke's "Sign of the Bottle" and Dillon's "White Bull Inn." The depot in the dark lane behind the Bull Inn was packed. There was a subdued haste in the movements of the men. Rows of shining pikes glittered against the walls. The silken standards stood unfurled.



For Emmet the day had been a terrible ordeal. Crushing disappointments had followed in quick succession. For the last three days the Kildare men had been arriving. To-day at five o'clock the leaders had returned home on a false report that the Rising had been postponed. Money promised had not arrived. Blunderbusses were scarce and, at the last minute, the trusty men of the depot were obliged to go out and buy as many as they could, for the men refused to rise without them. Worse still, there were blunders in the depot. The man who was to have turned the fuses and the rammers for the "infernal machines" and exploding beams had neglected to do so. The person in charge of the "slow matches" had mixed the prepared with the unprepared, and was now unable to distinguish which was which. The fuses of the hand-grenades had been mislaid. The scaling ladders were not finished owing to the hurry that the change of plan had involved. The work had become disorganised. The messenger sent to inform Michael Dwyer had taken fright and had gone no further than Rathfarnham. The attack on the Pigeon House had to be given up for lack of means and preparations. All forces were to concentrate on the Castle.

Emmet, distinguished in the dim light by the two gold epaulettes on his green uniform, was surrounded by officers and men to whom he made a last animated address:

“You are now called upon to show the world that you are competent to take your place among nations; that you have a right to claim their recognition of you as an independent country by the only satisfactory proof you can furnish of your capability of maintaining your independence—your wresting it from England with your own hands.”

Just then Ned Condon, who had been entrusted with the hiring of the hackney coaches, burst into the depot. Shaking with fear, he explained how he had met a British officer, and losing his head had fired his pistol. In the confusion that followed, the terrified animals had broken away. The first silence of dismay gave place to loud murmurs of anger. Emmet said nothing. In a moment his decision was made. The men who were to go in the coaches to the Castle must go on foot. The command was hardly issued when Michael Quigley appeared in the doorway. “They are on us,” he cried; “the soldiers are coming.” It was a false alarm, but all believed him.

At this moment many of Emmet’s officers were supping a little hilariously at Heavy’s, in Thomas Court, but those around him rose to a man. Briefly he ordered the men into line, determined at least they should not die like rats in a trap. Pistols and ammunition were dealt out rapidly. Pikes were shouldered. Emmet buckled on his sword and placed himself at the head of the

column. With loud huzzas they marched in order out of the lane, up Bridgefoot Street, and wheeled left down Thomas Street towards Dublin Castle.

## 2.

MEANWHILE, General Fox, desiring to take every precaution, had issued orders that, owing to the rumour of an expected rising, each captain was to return to his post and see that his company did not disarm until one hour after daylight.

As Lieutenant Brady, at the head of a picket of fifty men returning to barracks, turned down Cut-Purse Row, the high flash of a rocket crossed the sky. As they passed Market House the tramp of marching feet drew near. At the entrance to Thomas Street they came upon the revolutionaries, who had halted, a shadowy troop, grim and grey, armed with the dreaded pike.

“Loyal pikemen, charge them, here they come.”

“On to the Castle, lead on to Skinner’s Row,” came the cry from the rear.

Lieutenant Brady issued his orders with coolness and precision.

“Prime, load, and at the first charge, fire!”

A volley of musket shot broke the first charge of the pikemen. A second scattered their ranks. In vain the leaders strove to keep their men together. Through the blue flashes of musketry

Emmet could be seen, flying from group to group, exhorting the breaking column to advance, exposing himself in the thick of the shooting. Just then, shots and hand-grenades, fired from upper windows in James's Street, sent another contingent of military flying down Thomas Street, where they cut off the revolutionaries in the rear. The encounter turned to complete disorder. Stragglers, loafers and ruffians, attracted by the shooting, rushed to the scene, and finding pikes to spare joined the fray. A coach driving down Thomas Street was the first object of their assault. The occupants, Lord Kilwarden and his nephew, they drew forth and piked; his daughter they ignored.

Amid the shouts, above the clash of arms and the scream of wounded horses, word passed through the thinning ranks that innocent blood had been shed. Emmet could lead men to battle but not to riot. Discipline, his most urgent command, had been broken. To Ireland first, her honour. Another instantaneous decision, and his last orders to officers and men were to cease fire and disperse as quickly as possible.

### 3.

ALL this time, Byrne and the Wexford men were mobilised quietly in the Coal Quay depot. Fully armed and alert, they stood taut, waiting for the triple flare, their signal from the Castle. Nine

o'clock came and went; nothing happened. Byrne sent out a trusted messenger; he did not return; a second, and then a third was sent. The last came back in dismay with a tale of disaster and failure. He had heard of the scuffle in Thomas Street; he had witnessed the repulse of a gallant attack on the Coombe Barracks. In search of news of Emmet, he had made his way back to Marshal Lane; the place was in total darkness; the lane was blocked with a coach and the ground strewn with powder and hundreds of scattered pikes . . . Even as he spoke, on the hitherto silent quays could be heard the tramp of the patrol.

Intermittent shots told the men that all was not yet over. In the hope of meeting Emmet and putting up a last fight, Byrne decided to vacate the post. Quietly his men filed out, all well armed. During most of that night they marched through the streets of the Liberty but only met with a few watchmen, who were easily dealt with. At break of day they were forced to separate. It was no longer safe to remain abroad.

Dublin Castle was unaware of the rising until the dying Lord Kilwarden was brought to the Watch House and his grief-stricken daughter sought an interview with the still unbelieving Military Secretary.

The Yeomen had been told nothing of the expected rising. Late that night some of the Lawyers' Corps, hearing their drums, repaired to Merrion Square, their appointed alarm post.

From there they hastened to the Castle, where they were kept for dreary hours standing to attention in the Lower Castle Yard; there was little talk, but the sporadic shooting roused their attention and kept them in suspense. At dawn, a group of officers emerged from the Castle. The leader shouted, "Attention! Shoulder arms! Rear ranks take double distance! Order arms! Cartouches open!"

The weary Yeomen complied. Each had his cartouch box already furnished with its complement of ball cartridges. To their indignation first, and then amusement, they were now served out with pistol cartridges! There was not a round of musket ammunition in Dublin Castle!

#### 4.

EMMET and seven of his leaders had escaped down Francis Street, across Kevin Street, and striking up Camden Street reached Rathfarnham by way of Terenure. When they arrived at Butterfield Lane, Anne Devlin received them in amazement and anger. Anne was the daughter of a farmer whose fields bordered the lane. Her uncle, Dwyer of Wicklow, Emmet looked to as the county leader who would first back the Dublin Rising; her brother, too, was in his confidence. When Emmet had leased Butterfield House, Anne's father had sent her to assist in taking care of it. All these months she had served the chief

without doubt or question; her faith and hope had been great. At this moment she was dispatching a man on horseback with a consignment of ammunition. The sight of the eight fugitives caused her heart to stand still. "O, bad welcome to you! you cowards that you are!" she cried in Gaelic, "to lead the people to destruction and then to leave them."

"Don't blame me, Anne, the fault is not mine," Emmet replied as he passed with the others into the house.

His first thought was for Dwyer and his mountain brigade. He feared that next day they would march unknowingly into the lion's mouth. They must be warned at once. In haste they buried their arms that night and, after a few hours' rest, set out for Wicklow.

Next day came the expected raid at Butterfield Lane. Anne, alone, received the Yeomen. They rushed wildly in, ransacking the place from top to bottom. Four remained downstairs, keeping Anne with fixed bayonets under close guard. She had to submit to a severe examination, but would admit nothing further than that she was the servant and, as long as her wages were paid, she had no interest in the occupants of the house. The magistrate, accompanying the Yeomen, threatened her with death if she did not tell the truth. She persisted in asserting her total ignorance of Mr. Ellis's acts and movements and those of the other gentlemen. Such tenacity in a girl

was unusual. The magistrate ordered her to be hanged, and, half fainting, she was dragged into the courtyard. A common cart with tilted shafts was made to serve as a gallows. While these preparations were afoot Anne was propped against a wall and pricked by the Yeomen with their bayonets until she was covered with blood. "I have nothing to tell, I will tell nothing," she persisted. With the rope round her neck, the question was put for the last time. "Will you confess where Mr. Ellis is?" "You may murder me, you villains, but not one word about him will you ever get from me." The rope was then violently jerked. For a moment she hung suspended in the air. Then they released the cart, and she was flung heavily to the ground; let off with half-hanging, so that when she had sufficiently recovered she might appear before Major Sirr.

This gentleman offered her the sum of £500 if she would only tell of Emmet's hiding place. Indignation and a biting criticism was the only answer. Anne was sent to prison, staunch to the end.

Emmet spent several days in the mountains with Dwyer, and then returned to Dublin to his former lodgings in Harold's Cross. Wicklow and several of the adjacent counties were still ready to rise, and it was with difficulty that he dissuaded them from doing so. Emmet, aware of the welter of spies that spoiled the '98, had



based his hopes on secrecy and surprise. Given a little luck, a little more care, his plan had been eminently sound and promised success; but the advantage of surprise was now lost, and a rising would only mean the useless shedding of blood.

Emmet's colleagues realised the danger of his presence in the country and urgently implored him to escape while there was time. Their entreaties were of no avail; he refused to "abandon the brave people, implicated through him." This was an excess of chivalry and, probably, a fatal error of judgment. It was essential, however, that some trustworthy person should go at once to Paris to communicate with the French Government. Emmet chose Miles Byrne, who had an accurate knowledge of the preparations for revolution, and in how far the organization was still intact.

At their last interview Emmet, overwhelmed with sorrow, explained to Byrne the accident of the coaches, Quigley's false alarm, and the cause of his having to abandon the whole attempt. "The rising had failed for want of heads and means to make the different parts support one another." As he gave Byrne full instructions for his brother, he asked him to urge an expedition with the utmost speed. He pointed out the determination of the people and how their spirits had received an uprising by the effort; if only a speedy landing could be made, they would act with courage and enthusiasm.

ON the day following the rebellion, Dublin was in confusion. Yeomen were on permanent duty; troops were rushed from many parts to quell the rising that was expected to follow; the old Parliament House and Grafton Street Academy were converted into barracks; the Market House in Thomas Street bristled with guns; balconies, built on to the façade, provided a convenient shooting range for the soldiers; from the Exchange, hastily bought by the Government, heavy cannon pointed grimly. Orders were given that a high paling of oak was to be erected round the city.

That night, the Privy Council sat late. The Martial Law Act and the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act were rushed to London and carried, by both Houses, through all their stages in one brief sitting.

A plethora of proclamations plastered the walls and filled the sheets of Dublin newspapers: threats, bribes, and orders to the military and magistrates. £1,000 was the price on Emmet's head; £1,000 likewise for Russell, and for the murderers of Lord Kilwarden. £300 for the arrest of Dowdall, Quigley and Stafford. £50 each for the conviction of the first hundred rebels who appeared in arms in Dublin.

A regular "round-up" took place. Hundreds were arrested on suspicion, and the jails were crowded with innocent and suffering victims.

The old forms of flogging and the Triangle were revived ; yet no important discoveries were made. William Wickham, the Chief Secretary, boasted of having no acquittals, of giving " no promise of pardon even to the few who turned King's evidence." " So much for our civil proceedings," he wrote in a letter to London, " which will ensure the peace of the country, if the French do not come. But if they do, and in force, God help us ! Be assured, we are not prepared to meet them."

Emmet, " in hiding " at Harold's Cross, saw the persecution increase daily, and decided to write to the Government in an effort to obtain for the prisoners the same conditions as those obtained by his brother for the men of '98.

" If the Government can neither by novelty of punishment, nor by the multitude of its victims," he wrote, " impress us with terror, can it hope to injure the body of a conspiracy so impenetrably woven as the present, by cutting off a few threads from the end? "

He was twice interrupted as he wrote the letter. First came a man who had fought on the 23rd of July. Then appeared a more familiar figure, a cripple who walked with a peculiar gait. It was Leonard MacNally. The third interruption was a crash at the door and unwelcome visitors rushing straight into the room. Leading was Major Sirr. He asked Emmet his name and how long he had been there. Emmet gave an assumed

name and said that he had come that morning. Sirr left him in charge of an armed sentry and ran to seek corroborations from the landlady; at the same time he ordered his officers to surround the house. Emmet made a last bold bid for freedom and tried to escape through a window at the back. He was overpowered by numbers, and surrendered. Two letters and a lock of hair were removed from his stock. He was then escorted to the Castle where he was formally identified by Dr. Elrington, Provost of Trinity College.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### IN THE TOILS.

#### I.

THE Government had arrested the one important man, yet they could take no formal proceedings against him, through lack of evidence. This shows the prudence with which Emmet had worked up to that fatal accident in July.

A few days after the arrest, Wickham writes to London: "We cannot, I fear, convict him, without producing as his handwriting different papers, written apparently by different persons. Those who knew his handwriting in better days cannot say that they believe the papers of which we are in possession to be written by him. He was very much beloved in private life, so that all the friends of his family, even those who abhorred his treasons, will be glad of any pretext to avoid appearing against him, and we shall be left to accomplices in his own guilt, who will give most reluctant testimony against the man, who was considered as the chief of the conspiracy."

Emmet had for long practised the art of writing in different "hands." None of the documents

found in the depot, all of which were in different writing, could be clearly proved as his work. There only remained the advisability of bringing forward secret agents. But Wickham stated the opinion that "it were a thousand times better that Emmet should escape than that we should close for ever a most accurate source of information."

In the hope of gleaning some information from the prisoner himself, Emmet was brought for secret examination before the Privy Council. Standish O'Grady, the Attorney-General, that renegade with a great name, took charge of the examination. Emmet was perfectly calm and self-possessed, declaring his name, and at the same time, his intention of not answering any questions. To the first queries he replied: "I have already mentioned that I stop the examination," "I decline answering any questions." His decision was calmly firm, and the careful inquisition of the Attorney-General was fruitless. The interview was becoming tedious. Then came that fatal, unexpected thrust.

"By whom were the letters written that were found on your person?" There Emmet visibly started. "As to the letters taken out of my possession by Major Sirr, how can I avoid this being brought forward?" The tone indicated distress. "Have any proceedings been taken on those letters?" he continued. "I will mention, as near as I can, the line I mean to adopt. I will go as far as this—if I have assurance that

nothing has been done, and nothing will be done, upon these letters, I will do everything, consistent with honour, to prevent their production." But the three interrogators had hearts of stone. It was now their turn to make cool, laconic replies.

"May I know whether anything has been done?" Emmet insisted. "Might I in the meantime have assistance of counsel? Might I then make one more request, that until my arraignment nothing will be done?"

The members of the Privy Council had no idea whose the letters were, but they realised that here was their only point of attack. The examination continued without satisfaction on either side. Emmet revealed nothing save his agitation concerning the author of the letters. The attempt was given up as hopeless and the prisoner was returned to Kilmainham.

## 2.

THE letters in question were from Sarah, the daughter of John Philpot Curran. Their price was Robert Emmet's death. Curran was one of the most brilliant lights at the Irish Bar; he had become famous as a result of his powerful defence at the State Trials of the '98 leaders. The Priory, Curran's home at Rathfarnham, had been for many years the rendezvous for those distinguished in law and letters, for the keen thinkers, and all interested in ideas. Music, too, and

poetry were held in high esteem at these gatherings, where the most brilliant wit was the host. In this society and atmosphere the Curran children were brought up; theirs was a liberal education.

Emmet as a boy had enjoyed visits to the Priory, drawn there by the patriotism and advanced thought of Curran and his coterie; it was one of the few homes to which he continued his visits after his return from France. Sarah was young, vivacious and beautiful. Masses of dark hair framed her pale, oval face, to which the almost aquiline features lent an air of slight hauteur. But her eyes, large and dark, expressed depth and reserve. Sarah shared Emmet's enthusiasm for Ireland, and, during the anxious months of preparation, her interest and encouragement had meant much to him. After the Rising, and when it was no longer safe for them to meet, Anne Devlin became their faithful courier.

Sarah's remarkable letters are the only documents which can throw light on her character and on her regard for Emmet. From them, it is clear that she was clever, well-balanced, and full of the joy of life, and that her attachment for Emmet was based on warmth and understanding.

"Such is the perfect confidence that I feel subsists between us," she writes, "that I have no fear of misconstruction on your part of any uneasiness I feel . . . I wish you to know me exactly as I am, I cannot bear to conceal anything from you. At some future time, perhaps, when



your opinion of me should be more influenced by judgment than by any partial feeling, I should wish you to recollect that the violation of promise or duty brought most abundantly with it its punishment; and that at a time even when I was sunk by disappointment, without hope or future prospect of comfort, I almost shrunk from availing myself of the only consolation which still remained, although the one I prized above every other—that of sympathising with you, and endeavouring to atone for what you had lost. After all, in looking forward to any circumstance that might ultimately unite us, should we not, like the rest of the world, judge by the event; and those sentiments which I am now forced to consider as a perverse inclination, not fed by any rational hope, but rather strengthened by disappointment, I should then hold forth to myself as the triumph of resolution and constancy over temporary disaster and opposition.”

She is courageous and ready to anticipate future obstacles as being already and happily overcome. Poor Sarah! She little knew what lay between her and her looked-for happiness. She could not see that her path was to be a dolorous one or that her young hero was destined for a felon's grave . . .

She ends her letter in a practical vein and shows a clear grasp of French politics in their relation to Ireland. She jokes and relates incidents in a witty, amusing manner. “You ought to be

obliged to me for making you laugh, malgré vous," she writes . . . "Try and forget the past and fancy that everything is to be attempted for the first time. I long to know how your wife and ten small children are (the depots). Good-bye, my dear friend, but not for ever. Again I must bid you burn this."

The second letter is even more cheerful; Emmet has written to her again and she has no uneasiness about him. "I feel myself cheered even by the sight of your handwriting, and find more consolation from your letters than from any effort of reason on my mind. Your last, particularly, made me quite happy when I received it . . . You know I can laugh at the worst of times . . . I long to hear from you again, and hope the messenger will have a letter if she comes this day. I hate to desire you to destroy my letter, as I know I should find some difficulty in complying with such a request from you; but I think it very unsafe for you to keep it. I enclose you a bit of ribbon which was not 'originally intended' for a willow, but which may break, with dumb eloquence, the tidings of my inconstancy. I intend shortly to make a worthy man happy with my heart and hand, which, unhappily for you, do not always go together . . ." On the cover of this letter Sarah writes: "I am very uneasy about the poems I wrote for you. There were initial letters under them all. Tell me if there is any danger of the writer."

Sarah is sanguine and plucky. Her letters show a quaint mingling of 18th century propriety and her own fresh and original imagination.

3.

IN the guard-room of Kilmainham, Dr. Trevor, the prison doctor, and Dunn, a turnkey, concocted a crafty plan to entrap Emmet. Dunn suggested escape, and offered to carry letters from Emmet to any of his friends. Accordingly, notes were allowed to pass between Emmet and his cousin, St. John Mason, also under arrest. A copy of each note was forwarded to William Wickham, the Chief Secretary. The prisoners promised Dunn £1,000 if he could effect their escape; but he was only a turnkey and had little power to help them, even if such had been his desire. On the night appointed for the attempted flight, he told the prisoners that the affair was hopeless, that the suspicions of the Governor had been roused. Although disappointed, Emmet and Mason still trusted Dunn, and, on the following night, Emmet wrote to Sarah, telling her that her letters had been confiscated, begging her forgiveness, and asking her to burn all his. Dunn promised to deliver the letter; within an hour it was in the hands of the Chief Secretary. The "Castle" had now the desired information—the identity of the letter writer, also the proof of Emmet's handwriting.—The trial might go ahead.

Through his trust in human nature and by an impulsive lapse from his usual extreme caution, Emmet effected that which, above all, he wished to avoid—the disclosure of Sarah Curran's connection with him. This was one of the most painful of all the disasters that fell so heavily and in such rapid succession upon him at the close of his short life.

The "Castle" notified Major Sirr at once, and, early next morning, he and a party of Yeomen set out for the Priory, armed with warrants to search the house and to arrest Sarah. The family were rising when he arrived. Sarah, hurrying downstairs, was confronted by the Major, who told her that she was under arrest. The shock was too much for her already overstrained nerves; she broke into hysterics. Her elder sister, Amelia, of a more phlegmatic disposition, rose magnificently to the occasion. During the agitation she slipped quietly upstairs, drew Emmet's letters from their hiding place and burnt them carefully in the grate. Sirr, after vainly searching, was forced to depart without Sarah or the letters.

Emmet, as was customary for the "United Men," had nominated Curran to act as his counsel. But in the fit of anger that seized him when he heard of Sarah's connection with the prisoner, Curran threw up his brief and refused to act. In answer to his almost cruel note of refusal, Emmet replied: "I did not expect you to be my counsel;

I nominated you because, not to have done so might have appeared remarkable . . . I know that I have done you very severe injury, much greater than I can atone for with my life. That atonement I did offer to make before the Privy Council, by pleading guilty if those documents were suppressed . . . My intention was not to leave the suppression of those documents to possibility, but to render it unnecessary for anyone to plead for me, by pleading guilty to the charge myself . . . When I first addressed your daughter I expected that in another week my own fate would be decided. I knew that in case of success many others might look on me differently from what they did at that moment, but I speak with sincerity when I say that I never was anxious for situation or distinction myself, and I did not wish to be united to one who was. I spoke to your daughter, neither expecting, nor, in fact, under these circumstances, wishing that there should be a return of attachment, but wishing to judge of her dispositions, to know how far they might be not unfavourable or disengaged, and to know what foundation I might afterwards have to count on . . . Afterwards I had reasons to suppose that discoveries were made, and that I should be obliged to quit the kingdom immediately; and I came to make a renunciation of any approach to friendship that might have been formed . . . I then for the first time found, when I was unfortunate, by the manner in which she was affected,

that there was a return of affection and that it was too late to retreat . . .”

Emmet expressed his regret for having written to Sarah since his arrest, a fault for which he had suffered much; “but,” he continues, “when an attachment was once formed between us, and a sincerer one never did exist, I feel that, peculiarly circumstanced as I was then, to have left her uncertain of my situation, could neither have weaned her affection nor lessened her anxiety; and looking upon her as one whom, if I had lived, I hoped to have had my partner for life, I did hold the removing of her anxiety above every other consideration. I would rather have had the affections of your daughter in the back settlements of America, than the first situation this country could afford without them . . . If I had that situation in my power at this moment, I would relinquish it to devote my life to her happiness. I know not whether success would have blotted out the recollection of what I have done. But I know that a man, with the coldness of death on him, need not be made to feel any other coldness, and that he may be spared any addition to the misery he feels, not for himself, but for those to whom he has left nothing but sorrow . . .”

Instead of Curran, Leonard MacNally was assigned as counsel to Emmet. Together they went over the evidence. After each interview MacNally wrote out a report for Wickham,

giving the gist of his client's conversation and the line that he intended to take at the trial. "On this subject (Sarah Curran) his mind seems wholly bent, and cruelly afflicted," he wrote, "for his own personal safety he appears not to entertain an idea. He does not intend to call a single witness, nor to trouble any witness for the Crown with a cross-examination unless they misrepresent facts."

Hitherto Robert's mother knew nothing of her son's arrest. Her friends, who guessed that worse was to come, urged her to go on a visit to Wales; but her health was failing and she preferred to remain in her home at Donnybrook.

When Russell, who had waited in vain for the signal from Dublin, heard of the leader's arrest he hastened south to plan an escape, regardless of his own peril and the price on his head. He was seen in the city, arrested a few days later by Major Sirr, and, in time, suffered his leader's fate on the scaffold; a noble patriot to the end.

There was no further hope for Emmet, short of a French landing. That is what he eagerly anticipated; and so, resolved to avail himself of every means within legal procedure that would help him to postpone the trial. When on Wednesday, September 14, he was brought to Green Street Courthouse and put to the Bar, he pleaded "Not Guilty." When asked if he was ready for trial, he replied, "not until Monday." The court was then adjourned until that date.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE TRIAL.

#### I.

SHORTLY after nine o'clock on Monday morning, September 19, 1803, the doors of Green Street Courthouse were flung open, and the anxious white-faced crowd pushed forward for admittance. Almost at once the rising tiers of wooden benches were filled, and soon there was not a vacant corner in the small court. The talk ceased abruptly as the bright uniforms and gleaming bayonets of the Yeomen announced the prisoner's entry.

Eyes expressing pity, admiration, or mere curiosity followed Emmet as he entered the dock. Many recognised the slender, alert figure; others saw for the first time the leader of rebellion, and wondered at the refinement, strength and candour of that face. He remained in the lower part of the dock, his head bent low, until the judges took their seats.

Then his gaze passed coldly and almost casually along the stolid faces of the jurors, over the row of judges, and rested momentarily on the Clerk of the Crown who had started to read



the long indictment. He heard the words, "traitorous and rebellious designs." Were these the words that were to designate for all time the unending struggle for Irish freedom? He had "adhered to the King's enemies," he had been an ally to those who governed France, and were now at open war with "our Sovereign Lord the King." Our Sovereign Lord!

The indictment read, Standish O'Grady, the Attorney-General, turned to the jury. In the course of his long and pompous address he described the prisoner as being the "leader and original principal mover" of the rebellion, and of introducing into the bosom of his country "the enthusiastical French principles of despotism, anarchy, and of slavery, under the pretence of establishing a free and independent republic in Ireland."

His address was boring his audience; interest flagged as he elaborated proof that the Government had not been taken unawares and that the "Castle" had been fully armed and vigilantly guarded on the night of the Rising. He convinced no one.

In due course the Crown witnesses were called in succession. Emmet recognised Terence Colgan as he entered the box, and remembered him as the drunk tailor whom a few days before the Rising they had found asleep in the Bull Inn. He had seen him last in the depot, where he had been sent to help in finishing the green uniforms.

John Fleming followed; he had been an ostler at the same inn; and Emmet remembered that he had been trusted in the transport of ammunition and military stores. Patrick Farrell was now in the box, telling the judge that he had been detained in the depot the night before the Rising. As he described the wooden pike-cases made from boards which he had helped to carry in from a timber cart in the lane, Emmet knew him for the man whose life he had saved, when Quigley had wanted to kill him as a spy.

The next witnesses were army officers, who had fought on the 23rd and who had visited the depot in Marshal Lane. As the trial proceeded, Emmet watched his possessions being brought into the court, his bureau from the depot and his brother's letter within it; then his manuscript of the Proclamation for the Provisional Government, which was held up for identification. From time to time, Burrowes, one of the counsel assigned to him, rose and tried to disconcert the testimony of a witness. "No, no," Emmet would intervene, "the man is speaking the truth." The amazed look of the judges made all feel that truth must be a stranger here.

All through the morning and afternoon the long examination continued, and it was late in the evening when the case for the Crown closed. Sarah Curran's name had not been mentioned; Emmet was determined to make no defence either by witness or by counsel. The court understood

that the trial was closed. Then, to the astonishment of all, Plunket, the solicitor for the prosecution, hastily jumped to his feet and demanded his right to reply to the speech which Emmet's counsel might have made. Plunket's speech, utterly out of place, was more lengthy and bitter than that of the Attorney-General. Only a few years before he had publicly denounced the Legislative Union; now he wished to atone for his folly by broadcasting his changed sentiments of loyalty, in the hope of securing the important position of Solicitor-General, shortly to be vacant. His wish was granted, but for long afterwards his action was commented on in Bar circles with the utmost contempt.

The Attorney-General summed up the evidence, and charged the jury to give the prisoner the benefit of any defence he might make and to consider the nature of his vindication. The jury, without retiring from the box, brought in a verdict of "Guilty."

At Emmet's request, MacNally asked that judgment be deferred until the next day. The request was refused. There was a general stir in the court, then a death-like silence as the Crown Clerk addressed the prisoner: "Have you, therefore, anything to say why judgment of death and execution should not be awarded against you, according to law?"

EMMET took a step forward and bowed right and left to the court before he addressed the judges. "My Lords," he began, "I am asked what I have to say, why sentence of death should not be pronounced on me; according to Law I have nothing to say; as to why my reputation should be rescued from false accusations and calumny, I have much to say. I have no hopes that I can anchor my character in the breast of this Court; I only wish, and the utmost I expect is, that your Lordships will suffer it to float down your memories until it finds some more hospitable harbour to shelter it from the storms by which it is at present buffeted. Were I only to suffer death, after being adjudged guilty by your tribunal, I should bow in silence and meet the fate that awaits me without a murmur; but the sentence of the law which delivers my body to the executioner will, through the ministry of the law, labour in its own vindication to consign my character to obloquy."

His loud, clear voice rang through the court and was heard in the corridors; the porters and outer-court officials felt themselves compelled to draw near and listen.

"A man in my situation has not only to encounter the difficulties of fortune, and the force of power over minds which it has corrupted or subjugated, but the difficulties of established prejudice—the man dies but his memory lives.

That mine may not perish, that it may live in the respect of my countrymen, I seize upon this opportunity to vindicate myself from some of the charges alleged against me."

Emmet turned to Plunket and answered with skill the false charges brought against him—he referred to him always as "the honourable gentleman"; and when stressing a point he would put the two forefingers of his right hand slowly upon the outstretched palm of his left. As he warmed in his address he moved in the dock, despite his chains, with a natural easy grace, gestures and tone in perfect harmony, the body swaying rhythmically with the rise and fall of his voice.

"When my spirit shall have joined those bands of martyred heroes who have shed their blood on the scaffold and in the field in defence of their country and of virtue, this is my hope—I wish that my memory and name may animate those who survive me. I appeal to the Immaculate God, I swear by the throne of Heaven, before which I must shortly appear, that my conduct through all this peril and through all my purpose, has been governed only by the conviction I have uttered and by no other view than that of the emancipation of my country from the oppression under which it has long and too patiently travailed; I confidently hope that there is still union and strength enough in Ireland to accomplish this noble enterprise."

The last words were almost drowned by Lord Norbury's angry interruption, forbidding him to dare voice such treason in a court of justice!

"My Lords, it may be a part of the system of angry justice to bow a man's mind by humiliation to the purposed ignominy of the scaffold . . . but if I stand at the bar of this Court and dare not vindicate my character, how dare you calumniate it? . . . As a man to whom fame is dearer than life, I will make the last use of that life in doing justice to that reputation which is to live after me, and which is the only legacy that I can leave to those I honour and love, and for whom I am proud to perish."

Friends and enemies alike watched him, spell-bound. Many who were listening now had heard him last, five years ago, when as the favourite speaker of their College society he had raised the house with cheers. Fame and honour lay before him then. Many now realised that this was a power that might never come again. Others knew that here was a power beyond their force, a power that could only be silenced by death, the power of a man whose ideal would live because he had died.

"I am charged with being an emissary to France," Emmet continued, "an emissary to France and for what end? It is alleged that I wished to sell the independence of my country, that such was my ambition. No, I am no emissary. My ambition was to hold a place

among the deliverers of my country; not in profit nor in power, but in the glory of the achievement. Oh, my country! was it personal ambition that could influence me? Had it been the soul of my actions, could I not, by education and fortune, and by the rank and consideration of my family, have placed myself among the proudest of your oppressors? My country was my idol; to it I sacrificed every selfish, every endearing sentiment, and for it I now offer up myself. No, my Lord, I acted as an Irishman, determined on delivering my country from the yoke of foreign and unrelenting tyranny and from the more galling yoke of a Domestic Faction . . . *I wished to place her independence beyond the reach of any power on earth*, I wished to exalt her to the highest station in the world.

“Connection with France was indeed intended, but only as far as mutual interest would sanction and require. Who sought aid? We sought it; we had assurance we should obtain it, as auxiliaries in war, and allies in peace. Were the French to come as invaders or enemies I should oppose them to the utmost of my strength. But it was not as an enemy that the succours of France were to land. I looked, indeed, for the assistance of France, but I wished to prove to France and the world that Irishmen deserve to be assisted, that they were indignant of slavery and ready to assert the independence and liberty of their country. I wished to procure for my country

the guarantee which Washington procured for America, to procure an aid which, by its example, would be as important as its valour—disciplined, gallant, pregnant with science and with experience, which would perceive the good and polish the rough points of our character. They would come to us as strangers and leave us as friends, after sharing our perils and elevating our destiny. These were my objects, not to receive new taskmasters, but to expel old tyrants.”

In vain the angry judges tried to expostulate; their voices were hollow, their words empty. Emmet held the hearts and minds of all the court. Even the traitors, the cowards, the prudent, the wise, knew that his words of fire were not for them alone, but a far flung message to the poor people of Ireland and to her children for ever. They knew that the echo of that voice would live in the heart of Ireland, that its universal appeal would not remain unanswered.

Emmet denied the charge of being “the life and blood of the conspiracy.” “You do me honour over much. You have given to the subaltern all the credit of the superior. There are men concerned in this conspiracy before the splendour of whose genius and virtues I should bow with respectful deference . . . Let no man dare, when I am dead, to charge me with dishonour; let no man attain my memory by believing that I could have engaged in any cause but that of my country’s liberty and independence



. . . The Proclamation of the Provisional Government speaks for our views—no inference can be tortured from it to countenance barbarity or debasement at home, or subjugation or humiliation or treachery from abroad.”

Again the judges interrupted; again Emmet endeavoured to explain the objects of the Provisional Government, and asked that portions of the Proclamation might be read; but the angry ministers of the law were frightened, afraid of the prisoner's power, and forbade him to mention the Proclamation.

“My Lords, you are impatient for the sacrifice! The blood which you seek is not congealed by the artificial terrors which surround your victim; it circulates warmly and unruffled through the channels which God created for a noble purpose, but which you are about to destroy. Be yet patient, I have but few more words to say. I am going to my cold and silent grave—my lamp of life is nearly extinguished, my race is run, the grave opens to receive me and I sink into its bosom. I have but one request to ask at my departure from this world; it is the charity of its silence. Let no man write my epitaph; for as no man who knows my motives dare now vindicate them, let them and me repose in obscurity and peace, and my tomb remain uninscribed until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth,

then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written—I have done ! ”

It was half-past ten at night when the last accents of that musical voice fell silent. Lord Norbury, striving to overcome his emotion, pronounced the sentence of execution for the next day. The court soon cleared. Emmet, utterly worn out, was led from the dock. As MacNally passed, he bent over and kissed the prisoner on the cheek.

## CHAPTER X.

“ THE MAN DIES BUT HIS MEMORY LIVES.”

### I.

THOMAS ADDIS EMMET had spent an anxious summer. Reports of the organisation, its temper and fitness, had forced him to the conclusion that further delay on the part of France would see Ireland plunged into the tragedy of an abortive insurrection, which must inevitably be quenched in the blood of his people. Letters from Ireland urged the immediate need for arms, ammunition and officers. Napoleon had refused to see him. He pleaded that to do so would entail a recognition of the Provisional Government. For this he was not prepared until 25,000 Irishmen had joined his troops in Ireland. But he gave assurance that France would not make peace with England without the condition of Irish Independence. Nevertheless, Emmet felt that he was being played with; this refusal of an interview was only a paltry evasion, a plain sign of Napoleon's half-heartedness. He admired Russell, and Russell had never hoped for anything from France; old arguments they had had came up in his mind and now convinced him. Napoleon

had appointed Vice-Admiral Truguet, Préfet Maritime at Brest, to treat with the United Irishmen in his name; in that, too, Emmet saw the shadow of an evasion.

Many times he interviewed General Berthier at the Bureau de la Guerre. Pressing for supplies, however small, he pointed out that the failure of Humbert's expedition had been due, not to its lack of numbers, but to its late arrival in Ireland. In Berthier he found a bitter hatred of England, but nothing that he could construe as friendship for Ireland.

On July the 24th (the day after the Rebellion) he prepared a Memorial for presentation to Buonaparte, emphasising the need for despatch. A small force now would be of more value than an army, once rebellion had broken out and been suppressed. He was met with the reply: "Your zeal in this is very natural and honourable, but the zeal of individuals must sometimes be made to yield to superior arrangements."

In September, the Dutch Admiral, Verhuell, and Decrès, French Minister of Marine, were discussing points of landing, winds, tides and suitable ports, with a view to the Irish expedition. But it was not until late in the autumn that Napoleon ordered definite preparations for the invasion. In September he wrote to General Ganteaume, Préfet Maritime at Toulon, demanding the completion of the preparations by January, 1804; the ports of sail to be Rochefort

and Brest. This postponement shows that the representations of Thomas Addis had been of no avail; that the "superior arrangements" would brook no interference.

On September the 17th Miles Byrne arrived in Paris with news of the insurrection and of Robert Emmet's arrest. "So that now," wrote Thomas Addis, "almost every male relative I have in Ireland, that I know and love, is in prison and perhaps in danger. God protect them to their friends, their families and country." He determined to keep the news secret as long as possible, so as not to discourage the Irish in Paris. But his own heart was heavy in spite of Byrne's assurance that the Provisional Government still maintained its connection and correspondence with the country, that the organisation was not irreparably injured, and that the English Government was still in comparative ignorance. Byrne further assured him that a French invasion was now the main, if not the only hope. Thomas Addis feared for Robert's safety, feared the persecution that was England's belated but invariable cure for rebellion.

So he redoubled his efforts, brought all his arguments to bear on Berthier and the Ministry, hoping in a fever of anxiety that he would not be too late.

2.

PEN in hand, Robert Emmet sat in the narrow room allotted to him in Kilmainham Jail. Outside, the sentry paced, beating out the time measuredly, ceaselessly, monotonously, making slow the minutes of the few hours that remained. Emmet had finished his Report of the Rebellion that he hoped to send to his brother. The Rising was over. It had been a failure. Perhaps a future generation might learn from his mistake. Perhaps! As he wrote, the agony and horror of that day returned to him; the dream that had turned to dust.

Morning came over Dublin, morning with already the chill of the fall in its pallid breaking. The faint light in the room grew strong enough to take some of the strength from the lanthorn's light. Morning had come, too, over Rathfarnham. The hills would be blue to the south and there would be peace among the trees already turning brown and gold. There came a great loneliness in his soul. He belonged to nothing. He was here waiting for death; some perverse whim of fate, some inexplicable doom, always threatening, had now fallen on him. The people who had followed him, who had worked in his depots, who had forged his pikes, were in another world. He was alone, and alone he was to die. It was ordained so by men who hated him, to whose life and wealth and comfort he was a danger. He must die because they were afraid.

Even Curran was afraid. Councillor John Philpot Curran was afraid, for his pride, his respectability, and his new-got honours. He might once have been honoured by any patriot. He spoke well in '98, or was it only words? There was then a great hope of success; the French were coming. Perhaps Curran was then only a false weather-cock who read the wind too soon.

And Sarah, his beloved? His brother and Jane, his brother's wife would take care of her for his sake, if the worst happened and she found it difficult to remain with her people. Emmet sat down again to write his last request to his brother. "She is living with her father and brother," he wrote, "but if these protectors should fall off and that no other should replace them, treat her as my wife and love her as a sister. God Almighty bless you all."

Sarah had loved his cause, she had loved him, too. There were times when he felt himself to be the beginning and end of her world. How different things might have been. But he had failed. He was bound to fail. No one man's courage could send a spirit flaming through the broken heart of a people. He should have waited, time would have made them stronger. Even now, the French might have landed. They might be off the coast, with Berthier and Colonel D'Alton ready to land and march on Dublin. Napoleon! Napoleon! First Consul of France, has all the blood of the Terror been shed for Liberty,

only that you should be a tyrant and an emperor? There was Hoche, who died; he loved Liberty and would have fought for us; but you are only greedy for Empire. A whim of yours would save Ireland and me.—What have they been doing in Paris?

Three hours more; would it were even three days! Emmet was walking up and down. The first sounds of morning, birdsongs in the hush, of dawn, had merged into the unnoticed chorus of day. Outside paced the sentry, but the ordered regularity of his footsteps was unheard within. For Emmet, the outside world had ceased. He was alone. Nothing between him and God, Whom he must meet alone, to Whom he must go alone.

### 3.

FOOTSTEPS outside. The stolid feet of a warder. A drawing of bolts and a clanking of chains. The heavy doors swung open and the Rev. Dr. Gamble, Ordinary of Newgate Jail, came into the room. This was then the last thing man could do for him. He heard the clergyman's voice, heard phrases and words that were familiar; words that had been spoken long ago to bring love into the world, to humble pride in the dust and exalt the wretched and the afflicted, to lighten the burden of slaves. But what of understanding had this suave clergyman, or of pity, beyond that of a distant pity?



Could he feel for the needs of a man's soul? Had he ever seen visions, or hoped beyond his comfort? . . . Dr. Gamble was sitting on the bench by his side . . . Emmet found himself reading aloud the litany :

“ Spare us, Good Lord, spare Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.”

Again the door swung open, after the almost ceremonial drawing of chains and bolts. Emmet looked up as MacNally, that blood-stained traitor, entered hesitatingly, looking pale. Emmet looked into the eyes that seemed loth to meet his. He is afraid to look on death, he thought, there is nothing he can say. It flashed through his mind that MacNally had seen his mother. “ How is my mother? ” he asked. MacNally's lips moved, saying nothing. His eyes wandered restlessly round the cell. “ I know, Robert, that you would like to see your mother,” he said at length, in a voice so low that Emmet could scarcely hear.

“ O, what would I not give to see her ! ”

“ Then, Robert, you will see her this day,” replied MacNally, pointing upwards. Emmet's face hardened with pain.

“ God rest her,” he said, “ it is better so.”

He stood still and silent, his eyes fixed on the grey walls. MacNally was talking, talking with innumerable “ ifs.” If the Meath men and the

Kildare men had remained, accepting his leadership! Why talk of it now? It was no more.

They tried him in too great a hurry, they were impatient for his death. With ten more days to live, what might not happen? Napoleon must soon see that he could only strike at England through Ireland. Perhaps he had seen it already. Perhaps French sails were even now swelling over the sea. A new light had come into Emmet's eyes. They should land at Galway, he told MacNally, and move North. With Donegal behind them they could seize Londonderry. That would leave the North-West secure. The Castle would send troops to the North. The South, a bonfire, ready for the torch, would flame in their wake.

He paced the room rapidly, reminding MacNally of the Emmet of the Depots, when he planned with a high heart and a sanguine hope. But no answering enthusiasm awoke in the traitor's face, as he turned to Emmet and held out his hand. "Good-bye," he said slowly, as he left the room, and, with an effort, "God bless you." Emmet was once more alone.

#### 4.

AT two o'clock the main gates of Kilmainham swung open. Outside and facing the gate, infantry formed a square. Behind them were the people, holding back, not pressing on to the phalanx of soldiers. They were mostly poor

people, men and women of the Liberties. A few solemnly dressed merchants held back on the outskirts of the crowds. It was a clear, warm September day—a day for a holiday; but this was no holiday crowd; there was something foreign to the sunlight in that pile of grey buildings sinister and foreboding.

Emmet was brought forth by the guard; a stir went through the crowd; women cried; some men looked away. The soldiers led him towards an open carriage, in which sat two clergymen of the Church of England. The surrounding phalanx broke up to form itself in line of procession before and after the conveyance. The crowd surged forward as Emmet was about to mount the steps and he found himself looking into the face of an old priest, a face that he knew, that he had seen in his home. There was a look of pride on it now, pride and love and sorrow. The face held all his heart for a moment. As quickly as the restraining handcuffs would permit, Emmet untied his watch-seal and passed it to the priest, a token, and in gratitude. Then he mounted the carriage and sat opposite the clergyman. The grim procession turned left from Kilmainham, crossed the river and moved down Parkgate Street. The churchmen were silent and looked uneasy; the horses of the escort curveted and champed their bits; the soldiers' tread beat out a steady rhythm. Outside and behind the escort crowded the people, some of them running and

scrambling to peep through the guards that held the streets.

The procession was now recrossing the river over Queen's Bridge. Up through Bridgefoot Street it came, passing the entrance to Marshal Lane. How familiar the dark alley looked, recalling times of hope and preparation.

At last they were in Thomas Street. The carriage drew up opposite the Church of St. Catherine, beside the gallows that had been erected in the middle of the street. It was a crude structure—planks laid across empty barrels. Two poles rose above them in the air, with a cross-beam from which dangled the rope. Emmet stepped down from the carriage; the clergymen stood aside, leaving the way clear to the platform; the soldiers were in a square around him, outside their ranks the people pressed. As he walked towards the platform he got a fleeting glimpse of faces, silent and stony, here and there among them one that was tear-stained. A few friends who had known him as a boy stood as near to him as the cordon would permit.

## 5.

HE mounted the shaking steps and stood before the people, while the executioner undid the handcuffs. In that moment it became clear to him that the cruelties that man visits upon man are but the penalty of his short understanding. It

mattered not how they looked on him now. Hatred was but the blindness of the time. Some day they would know. Urged by the feeling that welled in his heart, Emmet cried: "My friends, I die in peace, and with sentiments of universal love and kindness towards all men."

He undid his stock and helped the hangman to fix the rope round his neck and the cap on his head. He stepped lightly on to the plank, pausing a moment before he pulled the cap over his eyes. The hangman put a handkerchief in his hand, the fall of which was his signal for the end. The crowd was still.

"Are you ready, sir?" asked the hangman.

"Not yet." The answer came very low.

Again the question and again the same reply.

"Are you ready, sir?" the hangman asked a third time. There was a pause. The hangman knocked the plank from its supporting ledge, and the people below saw the slender black body of Emmet sway on the end of the rope . . .

This was the end. Was this all? One thinks. If I had been there with all the tears that in our hearts we shed for heroism that has fallen in combat with insufferable evil! What was in the hearts of those who saw that white face, after a moment's twitching, grow still? That mad fool, Emmet! That crazy boy! Were there any there who knew that now were passing the last moments in the accomplishment of a sacrifice, long prepared for, in hours of vigil and dark questioning? Were

there any there who felt that that felon's gallows was an altar, whereon triumphed a heart and soul over things powerful, mean and base?

Twenty minutes passed slowly and in silence. Then the hangman cut down the body and laid it on the boards of the platform. With one blow of his executioner's knife he severed the head, and holding it up by the dark hair before the eyes of the people, he cried: "This is the head of Robert Emmet, the traitor."

A wild cry rose from the people, a cry of sorrow and despair, as though his blood had spoken to them; as though that silent mouth had spoken to their hearts words that they would not hear from his lips.

The crowd thinned. One or two brave hearts slipped through the cordon to dip handkerchiefs in the blood that trickled through the boards on to the ground. The soldiers feigned not to see them. Some dogs came to sniff the blood. An officer drove them off with his sword.

Before long, the cries of newsboys echoed through the fast emptying streets. The Government broadsheet was already published, describing in exultant terms "the wicked end and deistical opinions of the anarchist and traitor." Copies of this, together with an official account of the trial and a falsified edition of the last Speech, were hastily distributed among the people. In the Government edition of the Speech whole passages were interpolated, expressing the most violent

sentiments against France, French principles and, above all, French aid for Ireland. The Government wished the Irish people to believe that Emmet had at the end regretted his course, and had urged all true Irishmen forcibly to resist any interference on the part of France.

## 6.

A COMMON cart backed up to the gallows and Emmet's mortal remains were taken back to Kilmainham, where they lay in the vestibule until midnight, enclosed in a pauper's coffin. Nobody came to claim the body, nobody came to visit the dead. Late in the evening Petrie, the young artist, stole silently up to the entry, took a plaster cast of the face, and as silently disappeared.

At midnight, some of the Roscommon Militia, who were on duty at the prison, were told off to bury the body in the Hospital Fields, Kilmainham. Each member of the party received five shillings for that night's work.

Many years later, Barney Moran, a one-time soldier, tramp and ballad-singer, aged ninety-nine years, and an inmate of Ballina Workhouse, made a death-bed confession to two prominent men from the district, in which he told that he had been on duty in Portobello Barracks, when he was offered and accepted the blood-money for hanging Robert Emmet.

It is generally held that Emmet's body was

removed shortly afterwards from the Hospital Fields. James Petrie, one of the last to see the body; Peter Burrowes, one of Emmet's counsel, and Dr. Madden, the historian, all claimed that he had been reburied in the old Protestant graveyard at Glasnevin, and that an uninscribed stone marks the spot. Others believe that the remains were placed in the vault of Trevor, the prison doctor, or in Emmet's own family vault in St. Peter's, Aungier Street.

Hitherto, all search has been fruitless and the site of Emmet's grave remains a mystery. Excavation in the various likely places has brought to light nothing. It is as though his last request at his departure from this world had been granted—"the charity of its silence"—and that he lies as he wished, "in obscurity and peace, until his country takes her place among the nations of the earth."



## EPILOGUE.

EMMET the man is dead, but his memory lives. His name is cherished as a talisman that has power to call men to arms, to draw them from their selfish purposes, to call up in their hearts a pride, a nobility, and a courage that takes no count of odds. "I wish that my memory and name may animate those who survive me," he said, and so it is. His name has become one of the names that are called aloud at meeting-places to stir the hearts of Irishmen; his name is one of those that the men of Ireland will speak in their hearts in the hours of darkness before they face the dawn.

To those who followed him, he said: "You will show to the people of England that there is a spirit of perseverance in you beyond their power to calculate or repress." Ireland had then known two years of the Union, had been made a province by force and fraud, before she had yet recovered from the butchery that had followed the failure of '98. When Emmet led his men into Thomas Street in July, 1803, it was Ireland's protest against the Union. It was also the statement of the theme of a previous six hundred years

of Irish history: that England could not conciliate the affections of the Irish people. His death was the signing of that protest.

They say that he was a dreamer: but the interpretation of his dreams, his plans for the capture of Dublin, and his composition of the Proclamation for the establishment of a Government contain a completeness and a fulness of thought which reveal not the mere aspirations of a dreamer but the careful foresight of a statesman.

He had planned and set forth in the Proclamation a provisional constitution for the free Ireland that was to be, until a National Government was established, based on the votes of the people. He had realised that a new machinery of state must supplant the alien oppression. County and city committees, elected according to the constitution of the United Irishmen, were to take over the civil direction of their constituencies, were empowered to issue warrants for the arrest of murderers and those who had committed outrages during the wars, and for the seizure of their property pending the inauguration of national courts of justice. The Proclamation forbade the transfer of landed property, of bonds, debentures and all public securities until a National Government could be established. Tithes were abolished. The strictest discipline was demanded from the Irish forces—no enemy must be killed in cold blood, or treated harshly when taken prisoner of war. Property must be protected and justice yielded to all men.

Irish Militia, Yeomen or Volunteers had fourteen days from the promulgation of the Proclamation in which to surrender. This was the machinery conceived by Robert Emmet, that was to carry Ireland through the days of struggle on to a Republic.

In Emmet's Speech from the Dock we have a complete expression of the idea of Irish independence: "I wished to place her independence beyond the reach of any power on earth"; in his Proclamation we have a permanent contribution to the wisdom which guides the councils of those who will not sacrifice the real good of the people to selfish interests or short-sighted aims.

The people who cherished the picture and ballad, "Bold Robert Emmet," were not foolish singers to a dreamer, but people who in their misery sensed the greatness of his statesmanship, missed by those whose spirits were defeated by the momentary tyranny of force.







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